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DOGMA

DOGMA

IN HISTORY AND THOUGHT
STUDIES BY VARIOUS WRITERS

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PREFACE

THIS book, it is hoped, may be a small contribution to the great debate upon religion which is proceeding in every part of the world. The position of that debate, at least in English-speaking countries, is remarkable and perplexing. There is, we are told, a falling away from "organized religion," and with it a revolt from "dogmatic theology"; but at the same time there is a keen and widespread interest in the problem of religion as a factor in intellectual and social life. Though many Christians find this hard to believe, the truth is that the most effective kind of evangelization at the present time, after the witness of the Christian life, is a frank and well-informed discussion of those questions which, though often unspoken, are at the centre of the religious unrest. There are doubtless many reasons why people are not Christians, but chief among them are that they are not certain what Christianity means, and they are not convinced that it is true.

I suppose that many thoughtful men and women would formulate their perplexity thus: "We can see that Jesus, or the 'Christ ideal,' represents one of the

highest, if not absolutely the highest, achievements of human moral and spiritual life. In that sense we do not want to find any other Leader. But this gracious and heroic human figure has been surrounded by systems of dogma which He would have repudiated, and which are, at any rate, irrelevant. We are willing to respect, to admire, even to follow Jesus, but we can make nothing of the dogmas of His Church." Perhaps the reader of this book may find some considerations presented to him which will persuade him to look at the problem of Christianity in a more subtle manner. Dogma, it may be urged, is not so easily disentangled from the very earliest and creative days of our religion; and dogma need not be the cramping and iron-bound barrier to progress which it has sometimes become. There is another view of dogma, of its nature and function, which can claim to reconcile freedom with continuity.

The series of discussions here presented, seems, on review, to have one defect of arrangement. It would have been more complete had there been another paper on the most recent period, in which the consequences of the scientific and historical researches of the last century should have been surveyed and their reactions on dogma estimated. The reader may be conscious of a gap between Dr. Jenkins and Dr. Relton; but the general results of natural science and of Biblical criticism may be assumed as already known

by the reader of such a book as the present one, and he may be trusted to appreciate the heroic struggle of Dr. Relton to deal with a vast subject in a narrow space.

If there is any important divergence of view between contributors to this volume, it appears to consist in a difference of opinion concerning the value of modern philosophy rather than concerning the Christian religion. To some speculative thought since Kant, or even since Descartes, has plainly been pursuing an erroneous path, and they believe that the truth, no less than the doctrines of the Church, is best expressed in terms of that system of logic and metaphysics which the Middle Ages inherited from Plato and Aristotle. Others are not willing to despair of that progress in insight which one might hope from the accumulated criticism and reflection of many generations, and they are prepared to think that modern philosophy, deeply influenced as it has been by natural science, will prove a possible ally and even a means of restatement for the foundation affirmations of the Gospel. It is not the office of the writer of a preface to take sides, still less to criticize his colleagues. When, however, I listened to the brilliant lecture of Mr. Hanson I could not help reflecting that thought never really returns upon itself and never occupies again precisely the position which has been surmounted. Doubtless there is truth for us in the Scholastic philosophy, but it must be grasped by us in

a new way; and it is perhaps easier to "go behind Kant" than to refute him.

The substance of this book was given as a course of public lectures at King's College, London, during the Michaelmas Term, 1928, though several of the contributions have been largely rewritten and expanded. I consider it a great privilege to be allowed to write these few words of introduction to the work of so distinguished a group of scholars, and I confess to a sentiment of pride that, with one exception, all the authors are members of the Theological Faculty of King's College. I hope that Dr. Franks does not feel a stranger among us and does not need the assurance of our gratitude for his masterly survey of a field of research of which he has exceptional knowledge. It is perhaps unnecessary to state that each contributor is alone responsible for his opinions and no one is in any way committed to approval of those of his fellow-authors. Nevertheless it is hoped that there is sufficient agreement to make the book a coherent whole. The contributors are at one in their approach to the problems. They are all convinced that the Christian faith must be set in relation with the thought and science of the modern world, and not less convinced that the Christian faith has the inherent power of truth to adapt itself to the intellectual conditions of every age.

This book appears in the centenary year of the College

and may perhaps be accepted as evidence that King's College remains true to its tradition of striving to combine "true religion" with "sound learning" and of a comprehensiveness as wide as the Church of England.

W. R. MATTHEWS.

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I

THE NATURE AND BASIS OF DOGMA

By W. R. Matthews, M.A., D.D.

I

THE NATURE AND BASIS OF DOGMA

THE word "dogma" has acquired in popular speech a forbidding and even repulsive significance, so that to speak of a man as dogmatic or of an opinion as a dogma, is to accuse the one of arrogance and the other of irrationality. The meaning commonly attached to the word is the assertion of propositions which are alleged to be beyond question but which rest on no adequate grounds of proof. Doubtless the theologians who have dealt with dogma and have constructed dogmatic systems must bear some share of blame for the degradation of the word; but it need hardly be said that few, if any of them, would have admitted that their dogmas were without rational foundation, and even those who have relied most securely upon authority would have held that it was an authority in which reasonable men should believe. The use of the word by scholars and historians, though widely different from that of the ordinary man, is not, it must be confessed, without ambiguity. Professor von Harnack at the beginning of his great *History of Dogma* devotes several pages to the discussion of the nature and scope of his subject, and takes occasion to find fault with most of his predecessors who have laboured in this field. To follow his argument in detail

would lead us into technicalities of doubtful profit; and we may perhaps in this instance gain some valuable suggestions from the history of the word, even though etymology is not always a safe guide to definition.

The word "dogma" was not invented by Christians. It already possessed a meaning when it was taken up into the vocabulary of theology. This meaning was twofold. The philosophical schools of antiquity had their "dogmas" which they held sometimes with religious fervour. The dogmas of a school were those common tenets which were accepted by all members of the school, those which formed the distinguishing marks of Stoic or Epicurean or Platonist. It need not be said that these tenets were believed to be founded on reason, since they were philosophical opinions, but they were nevertheless the badges of the tribe without which a man was not reckoned a member. But the word was also used with reference to practical affairs and was frequently employed to denote enactments for the government of a city. This latter meaning of a decree or ordinance is the predominant one in the New Testament. St. Paul tells us that Christ has abolished "the law of commandments in dogmas" (Eph. 2 [15]) and that He has "blotted out the bond against us written in dogmas" (Col. 2 [14]), while in the Acts the decisions of the so-called "Council" at Jerusalem are described as "dogmas" (Acts 16 [4]).

These two original meanings give us a clue to the significance of dogma as a theological term. On the one hand, dogma was concerned with the intellectual formulation of the Christian faith. The process of dogmatic development begins when the Gospel seeks

to commend itself to the mind of the age by the use of current philosophy and science. This happened very early, and we cannot exclude the New Testament itself from the sphere of the history of dogma. Two great minds whose works are in the New Testament Canon have contributed to the intellectual formulation of the Christian message—St. Paul and the author of the Johannine writings. There is controversy concerning the extent to which Greek philosophic and religious concepts were directly adopted by these writers, but it is at least clear that the Logos doctrine of the Fourth Gospel and the divine pre-existent Son of St. Paul's Epistles are attempts to find theoretical interpretation of the meaning and value of Christ in Christian experience. The age which succeeded the Apostle saw the effort to relate the Christian message with the culture of the world made with full consciousness. To the Apologists, to Clement of Alexandria, and to Origen, the pagan philosophers, though not the pagan religion, appear in the guise of potential allies, and their aim is to present the Gospel as the highest wisdom or "gnosis," completing and fulfilling the essays of the thinkers of the ancient world. The doctrine of Christ is to be set forth as an intelligible word worthy of acceptance by those who have drunk most deeply of the world's wisdom.

But on the other hand, we must distinguish between theology and dogma. Not all theological opinions are dogmas, even though they may be widely and firmly held. A dogma has some tinge or taint of administration or government and implies the idea of authority. Dogma, to a large degree at least, grows out of theology,

but it is that part of the theological treasure of the Church which has been put forward with authority and has been required as a condition of membership. We must, however, allow for some qualifications of this definition of dogma in so far as some of the historical statements of the creeds are scarcely theology and yet belong to dogma. It would seem then that there may be Christian communities which are not, in the strict sense, dogmatic. A Church which had some generally accepted principles but imposed no creed or formula either on ordinary members or ministers would fulfil the conditions.

Two observations may be made on the definition of dogma which we have suggested. First, there is historically an important difference between the dogmas of the Christian Church and those of a philosophical school even when we regard the former as intellectual formulations. The religious dogma presupposes Revelation and professes to be nothing more than an interpretation or defence of the divinely given material. Dogmas are not free speculative conceptions, they are, in intention, the explication of a datum. Perhaps it is important to emphasize this obvious fact. In modern times attention has been concentrated a good deal on the philosophical aspects of Christian doctrine, but it must never be forgotten that the makers of the dogmatic system, both orthodox and heretic, conceived themselves to be primarily interpreters of infallible truths contained in Scripture.

Secondly, the place of heresy in the development of dogma is worthy of attention. It would scarcely be too much to say that without heresy there would

have been no dogma. The two momentous groups of dogmatic statements of which we think first of all are those concerning the Person of Christ and the Trinity; between them they constitute practically the whole of the Christian dogmatic system. They were developed in the heat of controversy, they were fashioned as defences against opinions which were felt to be subversive of the Christian Gospel, and their primary intention is to rule out certain lines of thought rather than to give a coherent conspectus of Christian truth. Anyone who is glad that historical Christianity is a dogmatic religion should spare a grateful thought for the heretics.

We have now before us in outline the historical bases of dogma. It is an authoritative statement of belief based primarily upon Scripture, but owing something to tradition (in which we must include worship and religious "experience"), and formulated in general by the help of conceptions drawn from Greek philosophy.

The problem which we are considering is however deeper than a merely historical enquiry. We are conscious that the question of real interest to us is concerned with the present. We find almost all Christian Churches retaining some part of the dogmatic system of the early Church and of the Middle Ages; we find, on the other hand, a clear reaction against the dogmatic temper in the minds of most modern men; there is doubt whether the old dogmas can hold their place in the face of our changed conceptions of science and philosophy, and we ask, How far is dogma necessary to religion, and if it be found neces-

sary, in what sense can we still offer an intellectual defence for a dogmatic religion? We might now proceed to consider the value of the various sources of dogma, Scripture, tradition, Greek metaphysics, in the light of modern knowledge; but these questions I shall leave to be dealt with in other papers, and I will venture to offer some reflections on problems which are even more fundamental.

The first question which suggests itself is the inherent connection, if any, between dogma and religion. We shall perhaps put the point at issue most clearly if we ask: Is an undogmatic religion possible? We have defined dogma in the widest sense as an authoritative formulation of the intellectual content of religion. There may of course be religions which do not seek to impose their dogmas by force, or at least renounce every other kind of force than that of persuasion; but that is not the real question. We have to enquire whether there can be a religion without a characteristic intellectual formulation.

Here, I think, we shall go wrong if we do not make a distinction between two quite different questions: Is religion possible without conscious intellectual formulation? And, Is *a* religion possible on the same terms? To the first of these questions I would answer "Yes": to the second, "No."

A complete justification of the suggested answer to the first question would take us deep into the debated topic of the nature of religion as distinguished from philosophy, æsthetic emotion, and morals. We cannot do more than glance at the various positions which are held. It is well known that many have

come to the conclusion from different standpoints that the essence of religion lies in some explicit belief. Anthropologists, like Tylor, have assumed that religion consists in "belief in spirits," philosophers like Croce have regarded religion as rudimentary philosophy, theologians like Martineau have meant by religion belief in one God. If any of these views is right, it is clear that we must agree that dogma is of the essence of the religious attitude. The tendency of modern speculation is, however, against such intellectualism, and we have learnt at least from modern psychology to look in instinct and feeling for the primary and abiding impulses of mankind. To me at any rate the more satisfactory theory is that which finds the matrix of the religious consciousness in a state of mind which is not yet explicitly cognitive. Among the theories which seek to go below conscious rational belief for the essence of religion we have many suggestions from which to choose. Schleiermacher, who was a pioneer in this line of thought, taught us to think of religion as "a feeling of absolute dependence." Professor Otto appears to be in the same tradition, though he discerns a specific feeling of the "numinous" running through all religion. Dr. McTaggart does not wholly abandon the intellectual element in his account of religion, describing it as "a feeling based on a conviction of our harmony with the universe." None of these seems to me quite satisfactory, and I should prefer to use the word "continuity" rather than "dependence" or "harmony," and define religion as "a felt continuity with a Reality which is beyond yet not wholly other than ourselves."

The precise form of statement chosen does not seriously affect our present argument. If the religious attitude is primarily an attitude of feeling and perhaps also of will, it is possible that it should exist in individuals apart from explicit religious beliefs. We must not ignore, however, the possibility that large and relatively advanced religious groups may exist without dogma. I understand that Hinduism approximates to that condition. The many sects within Hinduism doubtless have definite dogmas, but they are embraced within a whole which, to the outside observer at least, seems to be bound together by nothing more tangible than a common tradition and habit of mind. But however this may be, it is certain that it is not normal for religion to remain in this pre-intellectual and therefore pre-dogmatic condition. The religious attitude, though it may be best described in its elementary form as a kind of feeling, affects the whole personality, and by an inherent necessity expresses itself in act and thought.

When we consider religion as a social and self-propagating entity, in other words when we are thinking not of religion in general but of some particular religion, we can see at once that it consists of a common worship, a common experience and a common thought. Even the loosest connection between religious men implies some belief which is shared, though it might be difficult to define that accepted dogma. The exclamation of the member of Parliament in the debate upon Mr. Bradlaugh's oath, "But surely, Mr. Speaker, we all believe in some sort of a something," is possibly inadequate as the basis of a living religion, but it is

nevertheless dogma in embryo—or rather in the last stage of spectral attenuation.

Common worship and common experience, which are the characteristics of all specific religion, express themselves in cult and dogma. But they are in some kind of relation with tradition. Worship, experience, dogma are not the inventions of any one generation. Tradition is the link between the generations of worshippers, the social heredity which forms the basis of religious continuity. But this common worship and experience, together with the dogmas which express them, are in a twofold relation with tradition. They rise out of tradition, but from generation to generation they modify tradition. Tradition is not static any more than any other human possession. The French Modernists have expended much valuable thought on the conception of tradition which is still too little known in this country. M. le Roy has perhaps been too eager to call to his aid the metaphysics of M. Bergson, and we are somewhat uneasy when we see the tradition of the Church as the *élan vital* in disguise. But in spite of all extravagances the main contention is of great moment. Tradition is not necessarily a restrictive dead hand from the past; it is the growing experience of the worshipping community made available for the succeeding generations. "There is no live tradition except movement and life. There is no religion and moral life in humanity except by tradition. But tradition is no longer human if it ceases to be living." (Loisy.)

The conception of tradition which we have here touched upon suggests the next question which we

must ask, the answer to which will take us more deeply into the nature of dogma. Dogma, or at least a great part of it, is agreed to be an interpretation. An interpretation of what? There are several possible replies, not necessarily mutually exclusive. Dogma, we may say, is the interpretation of a Revelation, of an experience, of a tradition; but however we describe it, there is something "given," an object which is interpreted. There can be no question that this distinction of *datum* and interpretation is fruitful and even necessary: it contains some measure of truth. But when we try to think it out it leads to some difficulties. We must beware of easy solutions which shirk problems by handing them over to "experience." The point of view which we are now considering is very prominent in modern theology and owes its origin, I suppose, in its current form to Kant. It is well known that that philosopher distinguished two elements in Knowing at all its stages. On the one side there is "sensibility," the given; on the other there are the "*a priori*" elements contributed by the mind, the forms of perception, the categories of the understanding, and the ideas of the reason.

The position is not, however, quite so simple as we might wish. In fact we never come across the "given," so to speak, in an undiluted form. We can never isolate the datum so that we can contemplate it in a pure state. Mere sensibility apart from all interpretation is a condition which we may conceive but cannot know. All experience is in some degree also interpretation. This is true of the simplest act of perception; some work of the mind is always present, and this

remains true even though we may reject Kant's doctrine of the subjectivity of space and time.

If we apply this truth to the problem of the development of dogma, it is obvious that the conditions of that problem are more complex than is often supposed. It is sometimes assumed that here the datum and the interpretation can be clearly distinguished. We are invited to think of a creative period of Christian history where all is given, where we are confronted by pure "experience," and to believe that this is followed by another period in which the main attempt is to interpret this original datum. As we have seen, there is some truth in the view, but it will not do as a final statement. There is no need to labour the point that St. Paul and St. John present a religious experience coloured to an indefinite degree by interpretative ideas. Doubtless their thought strains to express an experience of the Living Christ which is more than any idea or imagination of their minds, doubtless there is something given to interpret, but who would venture to estimate how far the experience itself is modified by the categories and symbols which were present in their minds as means of interpretation ?

The idea that the Gospels are simple and unprejudiced accounts of the objective facts of the life of Jesus has long been abandoned by students, and they are recognized as being plainly documents for propaganda and instruction in the Christian faith, written to set forth Jesus as Messiah and Saviour. They are thus not themselves pure data unmixed with interpretation. The dogmatic motive is fundamental. This does not mean, of course, that they are unworthy of

respect as historical witnesses; they present to us Jesus as He historically was, though from the point of view of a dogmatic interpretation. The ultimate source of the Christian religion and of Christian dogma is the experience of Jesus Himself. It is because He was what He was and His consciousness was what it was, that the whole array of Christian doctrines came into existence. In some sense the experience of Jesus is an ultimate datum for Christian dogma. We must enquire then whether here we have "fact" apart from interpretation.

A complete analysis or understanding of the experience of Jesus is, for many reasons, beyond our grasp. It is perhaps the least of our difficulties that our records are fragmentary and coloured by the beliefs of the Church. Our greatest difficulty is that, on any hypothesis, the inner life of Jesus was that of a Person of unique grandeur, containing elements which are beyond our conjecture. But there is little ground for the contention of such scholars as Professor Bultmann that we can know nothing of the consciousness of Christ. It may be observed that Professor Bultmann himself in his book *Jesus* has much to tell us of what Jesus "willed"; and it would surely be a strange psychology which could so separate will from personality that a knowledge of the former throws no light upon the latter. Admitting, therefore, that we have some not inconsiderable insight into the experience of Jesus, can we hold that we have here "pure" experience, and absolute "given" prior to all interpretation? A moment's reflection will convince us that we have not. I do not wish to enter here into the controversy

about the "eschatological" interpretation of the Gospels, but there is one contention of Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer which seems beyond reasonable question, namely, that the life and words of Jesus were largely influenced by "dogmatic motives." The religious experience of Jesus not only expressed itself in, but flowed into, moulds which were provided by the thought and imagery of His race and time. The Messianic consciousness is, to some degree, dependent upon the fact that the Messianic idea was already in existence. The Kingdom of God idea was already there to interpret the relation of God with man. There can be no question that, in the experience of Jesus, the moulds themselves became transformed, and it is even possible that He adopted some of them with a conscious accommodation to the habits of thought of His hearers. His experience was, in the fullest sense, creative, creative of new life and of new concepts. Nothing certainly could be more foolish than the attempt to "explain" Jesus by a catalogue of current religious ideas, and I hope it is clear that I am neither advocating any such absurdity nor attempting to minimize His towering, His divine, originality. The point we are arguing is more subtle and more sensible. It is simply that even here, at the fountain-head of Christian faith and life, we cannot find datum without interpretation. Fact and interpretation are inextricably intertwined.

Religious truth is by many people supposed to fall short in some respect of an ideal of truth which they believe to be attainable in other spheres, and it is frequently compared disparagingly with the kind of

truth, for example, which we have in natural science. It is worth while, therefore, to point out that, in this respect, dogma and scientific hypothesis are subject to the same limitations. Science begins with experience and comes back to experience in the end to test its theories. But it does not begin nor can it end with pure "sense data" which are themselves abstractions from the actual experience of perception. It starts out from perception which is sense data interpreted, suffused with the racial prejudices and unconscious presuppositions without which no human perception exists.

We have been led naturally to our next question: What kind of truth may we expect to find in religious dogma? This is the most fundamental question which we can raise. Obviously religious doctrines claim to be accepted as true, and we are concerned to know what criterion of truth may be applied to them. The ordinary man, who prides himself on his freedom from the sophistication of philosophy, is apt to be contemptuous of the notion that there can be different kinds or degrees of truth. In this happy innocence he thinks that he knows what truth means and that he is certain any statement must be either true or false in a quite unambiguous sense. This is a dangerous delusion which, if carried to its logical end, will land us either in unlimited credulity or unlimited scepticism. A very little consideration will show that there are in fact several kinds of truth, though it would require a long investigation to determine their relation to one another. Take the following propositions: In Euclidean Geometry the interior

angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles: Honesty is the best policy: A melody of Mozart is like a May morning. We should probably all agree that each of these propositions is true, but clearly they are not true in the same sense. To point out only one difference, from the first we can deduce with absolute certainty a number of other propositions, only unfortunately we do not know whether those propositions have any relation with actual existence outside the system constituted by the initial assumption of Euclidean space. From the other propositions we can draw, at the best, only probable conclusions, though they may tell us much more about concrete existence than the first.

Religious dogma seems to be essentially symbolical truth. Most of the dogmatic statements with which we are familiar bear their symbolic character plainly upon them. "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven": in that phrase of the creed we have the heart of the gospel: it contains the thought of the divine condescension for man's redemption apart from which there is no gospel at all. Yet the phrase is a string of pictures. We cannot believe as a scientific fact that God dwells in a certain part of space called Heaven or that the Incarnation involved a journey of the Son of God through interstellar space. And yet without these pictures we miss the religious truth. No element in the Christian faith, again, is more fundamental than its doctrine of God, and that is most vividly expressed for religious purposes in symbols such as Father. The more abstract statement that God is love is still more evidently in the region of

symbol, for we cannot form any conception of love which is not based upon the experience of finite beings. It may be said perhaps that these examples are not, strictly speaking, dogmas at all, they are the picture language of religion, whereas doctrines such as that of the Trinity or of the Two Natures of Christ, are in a different category and partake at least of the character of definable concepts. There is, of course, a real difference which we must admit. The terms employed in the doctrine of the Trinity are more abstract and generalized than those which occur in the other instances which we have adduced, but the symbolical character still remains. It is confessed by theologians that the word "person," for example, is both inadequate and of doubtful definition. It is in truth a word which corresponds to a complex of experience with which we are acquainted but which we cannot adequately define. All religious truth is, in its nature, symbolical, though the symbols employed may stand in very various relations with the two higher activities of the mind, poetry and philosophy, ranging from the concrete imagery of the Lord's Prayer to the abstract symbolism of the Athanasian Creed.

To some it will probably seem that an admission of the symbolical character of religious doctrines is equivalent to a confession that they are not true. Any such complaint, however, must arise from a failure to distinguish between absolute and relative truth. The absolute truth must remain an ideal which is not capable of perfect realization by finite and temporal minds, and it is doubtful, to say the least, whether any judgment which we can form on any

subject whatever is absolutely true in the sense that a knowledge of the whole of reality would leave it unmodified. We used to think, for example, that parallel lines could never meet, but advance of knowledge has shown that this was not an absolutely true judgment in the sense in which we then understood it, but is true only with modifications and explanations of which we do not yet see the end. Knowledge of God, it would seem, must be of this relative kind, it is that knowledge which is possible to man. The only perfect knowledge of the divine nature is that which God has of Himself.

But we have already hinted that the symbolical character of religious knowledge does not place it upon a lower level than that which we have in science. We may argue without any paradox that scientific knowledge is also symbolical. For what is a symbol? This is not the place to enter into the refinements of the conception of symbol which have been so well drawn out by Canon O. C. Quick in his recent book, *The Christian Sacraments*.[1] We may say quite roughly and generally that a symbol is the more or less adequate representation of a reality which in its completeness is, so far at least, beyond our power to grasp. A symbol is not a mere fancy; it is true, it gives us reality, though not the whole reality nor in the form of a clear and distinct idea. The symbolical nature of scientific truth has recently found powerful support from the ranks of scientific experts. It is implicit throughout Professor Eddington's Gifford Lectures on the Nature of the Physical World. But indeed it is not necessary

[1] Nisbet & Co., Ltd.

to be an expert to realize this truth; we need only have some knowledge of the history of science. In the latter part of the nineteenth century the atom was generally regarded as the ultimate constituent of matter and little doubt was allowed that it really existed. We now know that this was nothing more than a first approximation to truth. The proton and electron have now taken the place of the atom as the ultimate units, and the change has involved a drastic revision of the whole conception of the material universe. The atomic theory of matter was not untrue. It was a symbol which has been modified by further knowledge. It was not the whole truth. A similar remark may be made about the Newtonian theory of gravitation as compared with that which follows from the theory of relativity. The reaction against the "positivist" attitude of the nineteenth century scientific fashion has gone so far that there is some danger lest science should fall into an unduly sceptical view of the object with which it deals. There is, we must surely hold, some reality with which we are concerned in scientific knowledge, and our progress is a real advance in the understanding of the object. But it is clear that our knowledge is of a symbolical character and there is no reason to suppose that it can ever become anything else.

There is an analogy between scientific knowing and religious knowing, but there is also a profound and significant difference. Scientific knowledge, though it may be, as Professor Eddington has said, a knowledge of a "shadow world," does admit of verification in a manner which appears to be quite beyond the power

of any other type of knowledge. In many cases scientific theory is corroborated by the fact that predictions can be based on it which are fulfilled. So simple an example as the occurrence of an eclipse of the sun at the precise moment foretold by astronomers is good enough ground for believing that science gives us knowledge in a sense which is not the same as other avenues offer. It is true that predictions have been based upon beliefs of a moral and spiritual kind, as by the Hebrew Prophets ; but though we may hold that, in the long run, the theory of the moral government of the world is corroborated by history, detailed anticipations are, to say the least, precarious, and even Jeremiah found it necessary to face the problem of prophecies unfulfilled. This does not mean, however, that scientific knowledge is more complete than other knowledge : rather perhaps the opposite. The capacity to predict depends upon the characteristic of science—that it deals with the calculable, measurable element in reality in abstraction from other elements. But, in spite of this difference, there seems to be little difference in principle between the mode of verification of scientific and religious doctrines. In the last resort, both are brought to the bar of fact—which means experience. A theory which conflicts with experience cannot stand. But neither in science nor religion do we appeal to the general experience of any ordinary man. We depend upon the consentient experience of those who are in a position to observe the relevant facts. The world as conceived by modern physics is violently in contradiction with the daily experience of the ordinary man.

Religious symbolism is, however, also akin to the language of poetry, in that it is concrete rather than abstract. We may welcome the tendency in more than one recent scientific philosopher to acknowledge a content of truth in the poetry which deals with nature and the fundamental elements of human life. And this is surely not only defensible, but even obvious. Poetry claims a universal validity no less than science. The poet undoubtedly describes his own emotions in presence of the object of which he writes, but he does so with the implication that other human beings in the same situation would agree that his interpretation was not false. There is a genuine meaning in our words when we call some poetry "true" and some the mere play of an arbitrary fancy. The language of religious devotion is generally pure poetry: the language of theology is the symbolism of religion intellectualized but not made completely abstract.

We must, however, leave this subject of the status of dogma as knowledge, on which a great deal could be said, in order to draw a deduction from the principles which we have enunciated. If there is any ground for an analogy between scientific knowledge and religious dogma, if, in spite of their obvious differences, they agree in this respect that each is an attempt to interpret experience by means of concepts or images which are symbolical and admittedly never adequate to the whole object which is experienced, we may expect to find that the analogy has some further suggestions. Is there possibly a progress in dogma as there is a progress in science? It must be confessed that progress and dogma have generally been placed in antithesis, and

the authors of dogmatic systems have been prone to claim for them immunity from change. Perhaps this has been due to an imperfect conception of the nature of revelation. If revelation is held to be not the supernatural disclosure of philosophical propositions, but the experience of God in human life, there seems no reason to deny that the subject-matter of dogma may enlarge, and the religious experience of the Christian community become richer. We have further to recognize that dogma necessarily makes use of ideas current in the thought of the day. There is progress, or at least there is change, in philosophical and scientific concepts. We may hope that the insight which we have into the nature of the physical universe and the metaphysical speculations which are closely connected with that insight are really an advance upon those of former times. No one seriously doubts that there is a progress in knowledge. On these grounds, therefore, we should expect the dogmatic formulation of the Christian faith to change and progress. A fixed dogmatic system which has no place for revision is a dogma not of life but of stagnation.

As we have seen, the authority of the Church has been a potent factor in the growth of dogma. From the point of view which has here been sketched that authority will assume a somewhat different form from that which it bore in the minds of the mediæval theologians. But we cannot abandon the belief altogether. For us the tradition of the Church is a living power and is not to be separated from the experience of the worshipping community. That tradition and experience have been expressed in the dogma

and in the forms of worship which the Church has evolved, and in their turn they are the means by which the tradition and experience are continuous from one age to another. Any belief in the Holy Spirit would seem to preclude us from holding that the Church can have been wholly mistaken, or that its persistent spiritual life is nourished on mere illusions. Any self-confident disregard of the authority of the Church must therefore appear as both sinful and silly.

But the authority of the Church has often been assumed to carry with it the belief in the infallibility of the Church. This is, however, by no means the case. To pay respectful heed to the opinions of physicists is the mark of a wise man, to suppose that they are infallible is a superstition. If by infallibility we mean that the authoritative dogmas of the Church are, in principle, incapable of revision or improvement, we must plainly say that we reject infallibility. We do not believe that new symbols will contradict the old or that the Church of the future can be discontinuous with the Church of the past. We believe that the spiritual pilgrimage of the Christian brotherhood through the centuries is not yet over, there are deeper and more satisfying insights and experiences yet to come, in the light of which our present dogmatic statements will appear not indeed false, but strangely imperfect, and therefore mixed with error. Bishop Butler in a famous passage asserted that both the world and the Christian religion were "schemes or constitutions imperfectly comprehended." The great Anglican thinker stated a principle which is capable of a wider application then he could have suspected. The

apprehension of the world goes forward with the advance of science. The Christian believes that he has in his religion the clue to the understanding of the world, but it is a clue "imperfectly apprehended." It needs to be thought out alongside the developing knowledge which comes to us in secular philosophy and science. The "faith once delivered to the saints" was not a coherent and final system of doctrine, but a principle and a creative thought which are capable of indefinite articulation and development.

The Christian view of the world and of human life is itself living. It knows change and growth, manifesting the characteristic quality of all living things, the preservation of identity through difference. When we have grasped this truth we are less disturbed by the vicissitudes of theology. At the present time we may perhaps see signs of the breakdown of the dogmatic system, and there are many voices which would warn us of the approaching dissolution of the Christian faith; but these breakdowns are the incidents of growth, they are the preludes of a new and deeper interpretation of the germinal idea. The analogy of science may serve us even here. The knowledge of nature undergoes transformations which are prepared by confusion and disruption. At this moment the accepted concepts of physics are in the melting-pot. The old view of the physical universe has broken down and the new and better view is not clearly in sight. Contradictory conceptions have provisionally to be held together, but no one doubts that at the end coherence and more inclusive synthesis will be achieved. The man of science never questions the rightness of his method

and his attitude towards the world. The men of religion have something to learn from the men of science. Loyalty to fact and experience and honest thought will lead us to the reconstructed faith which is the old faith better understood.

II

DOGMA IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

By E. J. Bicknell, M.A., D.D.

II

DOGMA IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

BEFORE we discuss the nature and function of dogma in the New Testament, it is well to remind ourselves of the origin and character of the New Testament writings. The books of the New Testament represent the literature thrown up by a great religious movement in its initial vigour. They find their unity in the fact that they spring from and express a common spiritual experience. As in all great literature, the writers have something fresh and vivid which they are striving to interpret. If we wish to summarize in a single phrase the life and experience that underlie and inspire these books, perhaps we cannot do better than say that they rise out of and reflect the grateful worship and service offered to God by the redeemed community. They are a social product. The Christian society came to recognize in them the classical expression of its own meaning and devotion. It stamped them with the seal of its approval, and in process of time was led to regard them as offering a norm by which future developments of belief and practice should be tested. Since Christianity started from certain historical happenings, namely, the life and teaching and death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, we must assign to these books a place in

the life of the Christian Church that no others can ever hold. The New Testament stands in a close and vital relationship to the earthly life of Christ and to the apostolic witness, that can never be reproduced. It embodies the record of the initial response of the Christian community to the impact of the divine revelation in Christ in all its freshness and vigour. These facts are of supreme importance for our present discussion. Putting aside all questions about the date and authorship of particular books, we may agree to find in these books evidence of the common mind of the Christian community in the days of the Apostles and of the generation that followed them.

This community was a religious community. These books were composed in the first instance by believers to deepen faith and guide life. They presuppose some acquaintance with Christ, however rudimentary, in those whom they address. They assume the common worship of the Christian society. Faith needed to be educated and strengthened. The life of the society needed to be purified and directed. In the midst of a hostile and critical world, Christians required encouragement and assurance. Further, the society was essentially a missionary society. We shall never understand the character of the books of the New Testament, if we forget that they are the literature deposited by a missionary movement. Converts desired information and instruction. Those who were attracted by what they had heard and seen, might reasonably demand fuller enlightenment. The oldest-known title for the Christian community is "The Way"; but the way of Christian living was for Jew and pagan

alike by no means an ordinary or an easy way. So, the leaders and teachers of the Church were faced with a twofold task, first the quickening and deepening of the common life of the Christian fellowship itself, the making plain to its members of all that was involved in the Christian calling, and secondly the presentation to the world of the Gospel in a way that it could appreciate and understand. Hence in the study of the New Testament, we oversee the Christian society coming to self-consciousness, growing in the awareness of all that was involved in being the people of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ for the true worship and service of God, and also summoning all men to come and share in the wealth of new life that abounded in the body of Christ.

Thus, the original scheme of the Gospel of St. John leads up to the confession of St. Thomas, "My Lord and my God," and concludes with the statement that the selection of signs has been made, "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye may have life in his name." A similar purpose underlies the Synoptic Gospels, not least St. Mark. They were written to point men to Jesus, as the one who came to fulfil God's promise of salvation, and to invite men to join in the fellowship of His disciples. Even the Jesus of St. Mark is plainly a supernatural figure, the "Son of God," and recognized as such by the heathen centurion. Again, no passage is more typical of the general aim of the writers of the New Testament than the opening verses of the First Epistle of St. John. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye may

have fellowship with us: yea and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ: and these things we write that our joy may be fulfilled!"

What, then, is the function of dogma in the New Testament? The New Testament is the literature of a missionary religion. Worship is the characteristic activity of religion, and service as springing out of worship. But worship implies some form of belief. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve." The worship of Israel rested on a belief in Jehovah, as the one God, and as a God who desired service of a particular kind from His people. Further, a missionary message must from its very nature be dogmatic. The missionary preaches rather than argues, though he must be prepared to explain and defend the truths implicit in his preaching.

Accordingly we are prepared to find that from the very first the worship and service of the primitive Christian community were based on quite definite presuppositions. The fellowship of believers at Jerusalem was distinguished from the rest of the Jews by the belief not simply that a Messiah was coming, but that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, who had indeed been rejected by Israel and crucified, but had been vindicated by God in the resurrection, and would soon return from heaven in full Messianic glory to judge the world and inaugurate the Kingdom of God, a foretaste of which believers already enjoyed through the coming of the Holy Spirit, whom He had sent. Here is already a collection of dogmas upon which were based the common life and worship of the community, which were being spontaneously evolved side by side with the

older Jewish worship. Apparently from the time of the resurrection Jesus was known as "the Lord." Believers attempted to order their lives and the life of the community in accordance with the words of the Lord, as they were remembered. They trusted to the guidance and power of the Spirit to meet new situations. When the first martyr, St. Stephen, died with the prayer upon his lips, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," he was only expressing in the hour of need the habitual attitude to the ascended Lord which prevailed in the Church at Jerusalem, an attitude which cannot in the long run be distinguished from worship. But the worship of Jesus as Lord and Saviour, especially by men steeped in monotheism, involved dogmatic assumptions of a far-reaching kind, though it was long before the Church became fully aware of the problem. It is impossible to call a halt between the proclamation and worship of Jesus as Lord and redeemer and something like the decision of the Council of Nicæa. In short, if anyone desires an undogmatic Christianity, he will not find it in any book of the New Testament. From the earliest days the worship and life of the Christian Church owed its distinctive character to dogmatic beliefs which were, and were recognized by friends and foes alike to be, of the most controversial kind.

The position is complicated by the fact that these beliefs were no abstract convictions, but were inextricably bound up with assertions that certain events had actually happened, and that the certainty of their happening was guaranteed by eye-witnesses appointed for that express purpose by God Himself. Jesus of Nazareth had been crucified at Jerusalem by

Pontius Pilate. On the third day He had been raised from the dead, and had appeared to witnesses chosen by God. No doubt, it was not the bare historical events that were regarded as vital to Christian faith, but the interpretation of those events. The early identification of Jesus Christ with the "Suffering Servant" of Isaiah recognized in His death a redemptive significance. The resurrection declared before the world God's endorsement of His claim to be the Christ and the Son of God. But it still remains true that for the writers of the New Testament it was unthinkable that dogma should be divorced from facts. The God whom Christians worshipped was a God who had always acted in history, and who had revealed His character and purpose by the great things that He had done. This action of God in history had culminated in the coming and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is impossible to over-emphasize the testimony of St. Paul on this point, especially as he is sometimes supposed, mistakenly, as I believe, to be relatively indifferent to the historical life of Jesus. He declares in 1 Corinthians xv. that the gospel which he preaches is one with that preached by the rest of the apostles. "I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures." Then follows what is indisputably in some form an official list of appearances. It is probable that he conflates the credal statement of the Church of Antioch with that of the Church of Jerusalem. In any case the evidence is overwhelming that the

gospel of the Apostolic Church was unanimously held to include and rest on dogmatic beliefs based on history.

At this point it may be well to insist that in any attempt to study the dogmatic presuppositions of the Apostolic Church, the dogmas which are implicit in the writings of the New Testament are often no less important than those which are more often explicitly affirmed. The most vital convictions of any community are those which are taken for granted, until some day they are challenged. So it is a mistake to suppose that the place which a particular doctrine, such as, for instance, "justification by faith," holds in the writings of the New Testament is necessarily an indication of the place which it held in ordinary Christian thought and teaching. St. Paul is concerned to affirm and defend it, precisely because it was being denied. On the other hand he only alludes in passing to beliefs which were generally held by Christians, but about which there was no difficulty. Or again if 1 Corinthians had not survived, it would plausibly be argued that St. Paul knew, or at least cared, nothing about the Lord's Supper. Yet there can be little doubt that everywhere the "breaking of the bread" on the Lord's Day, with all its doctrinal implications, was the focus of the worship and fellowship of the Christian society. St. Paul does not mention it elsewhere, because he took it for granted. There was no need to insist on its observance. The dogmatic teaching that he gave on the subject to the Corinthians, was no innovation. It expressed the common belief of the whole Christian Church. Yet, if

there had been no abuses in the Church of Corinth, we should have had no mention of it.

We must, however, now turn to the more explicit dogmatic statements in the New Testament. We may begin by observing that they are always subservient to its main purpose. The occasion and the form of these statements are primarily conditioned by the interests of worship and conduct. There is no speculation for its own sake. Indeed in all the writers of the New Testament there is a lack of that purely cognitive interest in the truth about things, which is proper to science and philosophy. Let us develop this point.

It has been the habit of theologians to appeal to proof texts in support of this or that doctrine. Rightly used, this method of argument is necessary and valuable. But, unless the nature of the dogmatic affirmations of the New Testament is rightly apprehended, and the limitations of the purpose for which they were originally framed are respected, the result will be an abstract and artificial dogmatism out of all relation to life and devotion. Not only is it necessary to pay due regard to the context in which they occur and to the immediate aim of the writer, but it is essential to relate them to those principles of worship or conduct which they were written to illustrate or enforce. We should agree in rejecting any view that treats texts as in effect divinely dictated scientific statements of divine truth. The theory of a "block revelation," that is of a divinely revealed, verbally inerrant system of dogmatic propositions, which we are bound to accept as the foundation of our faith, offends not only reason, but Christian faith. To regard the doctrinal statements

of the New Testament writers as verbally inspired, so as to convey with scientific precision and in unalterable language ready-made information about God and God's dealings with man, is contrary not only to our intelligence, but to our conscience. We do indeed most fully believe that God has revealed Himself to the Church both through the Incarnation and the coming of the Spirit, but we do not believe that this revelation was in the form of, or included, a series of verbal propositions, disclosing infallible information about the being of God, or the manner of the Incarnation, or the future of the world. What God reveals is rather Himself, and Himself as acting in the world. The appeal is made not only to reason, but to conscience. The initiative in the human response by which alone God's revelation can be apprehended and realized, rests with the moral and emotional side of man rather than with the pure intellect. There is a real experience of God which quickens the life and worship alike of the individual believer and of the society, but the dogmatic statements of the New Testament are the attempt to make plain to the Church itself and to others what beliefs are implicit in this experience. In other words worship and life come first. In the actual worshipping and living God is made known. The conscious formulation of the beliefs that inspire and sustain that worship and that life follows ; and though this formulation is indeed the work of the Holy Spirit, it is His work as mediated through human reflection and utterance, and it is expressed in the thought-forms of the age.

If, then, we apply these principles to our treatment of the dogmatic passages of the New Testament, we

shall find ourselves unable to accept any use of them which regards them as in the strict sense scientifically precise. We shall be suspicious of a rigid logic that adds them together or combines them with scientific truths obtained from elsewhere, in order to obtain new conclusions for which the authority of revelation is claimed. The words and phrases of the New Testament are not to be regarded as exhaustive and exact definitions of spiritual realities and truths, comparable to the axioms and definitions of, say, mathematics. Rather the dogmatic passages of the New Testament are in quality evangelical and devotional, not purely intellectual. There is no trace in them of that complete disinterestedness to everything save intellectual truth which is the duty of the scientist or of the philosopher. Dogma is treated as the vital principle of Christian living and Christian adoration. Accordingly the doctrinal propositions of the New Testament are to be regarded as akin not so much to scientific, as to moral and artistic judgments. They describe rather than define. The language which they employ is not the refined and exact terminology of the specialist, but rather the common speech of the ordinary man. Its use is doubtless coloured by the peculiar emotional experience that it attempts to describe, but all the same it tries to say something that the plain man will be able to grasp. It points to an experience into which in some measure he is able to enter. It promises that he will share it in all its fulness, if he will fulfil the necessary conditions. These are not primarily intellectual. They do not demand rare gifts or technical training, but rather lie within reach of our common

humanity. The dogmas of the Christian religion do indeed make great demands on human nature, but these are moral, rather than intellectual.

It is therefore significant that the most formal and developed statements of the doctrine of the Trinity are to be found in a formula for baptism, and in what is in effect a benediction. Let us consider this latter in detail. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God (ὁ θεός, i.e. in N. T. usage, God the Father) and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." It is reasonable to postulate that St. Paul meant by these phrases something intelligible to himself. It is further reasonable to hold that he expected his readers to understand what he meant. He was not asserting anything unfamiliar. He was employing terms well known to the Corinthians through his teaching. This sentence implies a practical belief in God the Father, in Jesus Christ as Lord and Redeemer, and in the Holy Spirit as bestowing the divine power through which fellowship was made possible. The whole life and worship of the Corinthian Church were determined by these dogmas. The love of God is a dogma not indeed difficult to understand, but hard to reconcile with the facts of life. The favour of the Lord Jesus Christ was the central truth of the Gospel. The very existence of the Christian Church was the reply to the amazing offer of free salvation through Christ. The fellowship that broke down barriers of class and race and issued in love such as the world had never seen, was a fact of daily experience, and was felt to be the work of more than human power. In short, St. Paul's phrases were intended to have a definite

intellectual content, but they are descriptions rather than theological formulas. Their manner of statement resembles moral or æsthetic judgments rather than scientific judgments. Though they contain metaphysical implications, they are not exact philosophical statements. They imply reflection, but not the precise and abstract thought of the metaphysician. Their form is rather that of the picture thinking which is the natural method of the untrained mind. There is nothing technical about them, except so far as it is assumed that the readers are familiar with the experience of salvation through Christ and with membership of the Christian society.

Take again such a sentence as "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." That is not a merely emotional utterance, though it is charged with devotional fervour. It implies reflection on the meaning of the life and death of Christ. It provides an answer to questions that might be asked about the Cross. It explains the experience of redemption. The saving activity of Christ is no mere human achievement. It is a real act of God. But for all this it represents a gospel rather than a theology. The very ambiguity of the Greek suggests that it was not composed with that meticulous precision which befits a philosopher. It describes a dogma in phrases that the ordinary man can understand. Such a statement may well be judged to be inconsistent with any theory that attempts to contrast the love of Christ with the wrath of the Father. It implies that the atoning work of Christ proceeds from the love of the Father. But the primary appeal is still to devotion rather than to the intellect.

On the other hand, when we argue that the dogmatic statements of the New Testament were never intended to convey purely scientific or philosophical truth even about God, that their interest is never merely cognitive, we do not suggest for a single instant that they are untrue. Rather the propositions that they contain, and the form in which they are expressed, belong to the sphere of religion, not to that of science or philosophy. They are indeed true, but with the kind of truth proper to their subject.

For religion in its essential nature claims to be objective. It is concerned with what is. God is the supremely real. Worship is an attitude towards, and a response to, reality. And this is above all true of Christianity. It proclaimed that it brought men to a knowledge of the one true and genuine God, who had revealed himself in Christ. It contrasted the truth of the Gospel with the fables and falsehoods of pagan religion. In Christianity the claim of religion to give men insight into the ultimately real through worship and moral obedience reaches its climax. It denies that mere intellectual acuteness divorced from a life of moral obedience and spiritual devotion can give more than a superficial acquaintance with the things of God. Religion has its own approach to reality, and that is in the first instance by faith issuing in worship and obedience, by a response of the whole man to the appeal made by God. The intellect can only work on material supplied by the moral and devotional life. We must indeed serve God with our minds. It is the duty of Christians to try to understand their religion and to test and purify it by the exercise of reason. Only so

can it grip the whole of man's nature. Only so can the message of the Gospel be presented in an intelligible form to the world and brought into touch with the varied interests of men. But before the intellect can work on religious experience, the religious experience must be there. And just because religious experience is contact with reality there will always remain an element that eludes the intellect. The rationalization will never be quite complete. The dogmatic formula will always be inadequate. The theological idea will always have ragged edges. That is why abstract logic working on phrases and ideas supplied by Christian devotion is unsatisfactory. The realities are never completely known. They transcend the powers of the human intellect. It is a commonplace of Christian thought that God, the ultimate reality, can be more fully known by worship than by definition.

From this point of view the dogmatic statements of the New Testament have the more claim to possess unique and abiding value for all ages, precisely because they do not move on the level of exact scientific or philosophical accuracy. They do indeed profess to assert truth that is true for all minds. They claim to express dogmas that must always be the guiding principles for all genuine worship. They claim to give a basis for life that is in harmony with the laws of the universe. They do not treat such dogmas as matters of taste or opinion. But they do not pretend to a greater precision than belongs to those judgments about the world which the ordinary man is always making.

The nearest approach that we get to a formal theology

is when a writer develops a Christian idea in order to oppose some error in thought or life that threatened the purity of Christian living. Even so the motive is never mere speculation, or even the desire for a greater intellectual precision. It is the maintenance of Christian devotion and Christian standards of life. The errors attacked were novelties which threatened to undermine the truth of redemption. In so far as they involved an element of speculation, it was the heretics who speculated. If the apostolic writers were compelled to formulate their beliefs with a greater fulness and precision, or to think out what the traditional worship and faith involved, the primary purpose was to rule out views which impaired the power of the Gospel.

In the Epistle to the Colossians, for instance, St. Paul develops a doctrine of the person of Christ. As against teaching which reduced Him to the rank of an angel, or treated Him as only one among many agents of redemption, he equated Him with the Word or Wisdom of God, though he never actually uses the term. By this he vindicates His uniqueness and cosmic significance. Again he asserts that in Him dwells "the fulness of the Godhead bodily," that is in its entirety, as opposed to teaching that distributed the fulness of the Godhead among a host of divine beings, of whom Christ was only one. This is no speculative Christology. It is the justification of the claim that Christ and Christ alone is to be worshipped as the Saviour and redeemer of the world.

Again, when St. Paul says of Christ, "Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich," or when in

the famous passage in Philippians II, he speaks of Christ as "emptying himself," or perhaps the words should be rendered, "lavishing himself," he had no intention of giving a theory of the manner of the Incarnation. He is reproducing ideas familiar to himself and his converts for a purely practical end. He wishes the Corinthians to give generously to the collection for the saints. Appeal is made to the example of Christ. He desires the Philippian Church in general, and two rival Church workers in particular, to live in charity. Appeal is made to the humility of Christ. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." The following verses set out the voluntary self-humiliation of Christ. Any exegesis that treats each of the terms as if it possessed the delicate shade of meaning that it would possess in a philosophical treatise, is precarious. St. Paul is correcting not the theology of the Philippians, but their quarrelsomeness. The word "form" is indeed found in philosophical terminology, but it was also in much more general use. We must beware of attempting to find in such a passage as this an answer to questions which became acute in later controversies, but which had never entered the mind of the apostle or his hearers. At the same time St. Paul's appeal could only be morally impelling, if it was an appeal to some quite definite belief. It implied that both he and his converts believed that Christ had voluntarily done some great act of self-humiliation and self-sacrifice for the good of others. Taken in their context, these passages can hardly mean less than that St. Paul believed that before He appeared in human form on earth, Jesus Christ had

existed in all the fulness of divine glory. Whatever the word "form" means, it means the same when in the same sentence he speaks of the "form of God" and the "form of a servant." But the language is not that of an articulated theology, but is rather picture language. Possibly the best word to describe this kind of statement is "mythological," if we can only get rid of the idea that what is mythological is purely imaginative, and bears no relation to truth and fact. Rather there are kinds of truth that can be less inadequately expressed in pictures and symbols than in scientific definitions. There are aspects of reality which the poet or the artist seizes and tries to hold, but which elude the scientist. The statements of the poet or artist preserve the emotional values, which a more intellectually exact statement misses. They can hand on experience by a direct appeal to the heart and conscience, which a cold and correct formula can never make. So for the purposes of religion, "mythology" in this sense, the employment of picture and symbol, may be more true and valuable than scientific definition. If it lacks precision and is unable to provide the premisses for a syllogism, it possesses insight and power. It provides a basis for conduct and devotion. It preserves ideas that stimulate worship and goodness. "Mythology" only becomes dangerous when attempts are made to invest it with the kind of truth that it does not attempt to attain. Only when spiritual discernment is confused with logical accuracy, and judgments of value are confused with judgments of fact, so that what were intended as moral or devotional truths are treated as intellectually precise formulas,

is "mythology" exposed to the charge of untruth. But the fault lies in those who misinterpret it.

So then we claim not only for the dogmas of the New Testament that are universally assumed in its pages, such as the existence and goodness of God, but also for the more explicit doctrinal statements that occur, especially in the Epistles, an abiding value. And this value is partly dependent on the fact that they do not attempt the exactness and precision which belong to the definitions of students who are moved by the purely cognitive interests of science and philosophy. This very limitation enables them to express spiritual and devotional values in a form that can never grow out of date and which can make an appeal to human nature in all ages. We do not deny the right and the duty of theologians to construct a strictly scientific theology and to attempt a precise formulation of the intellectual truths implicit in Christian life. It is their task to relate these truths to those which come to us from other sources, such as natural science. But these avowedly intellectual structures, from the nature of the case, possess an element that will sooner or later need revision or restatement. Indeed we may say that the more completely that they satisfy the intellectual curiosity of one age, the more certain it is that they will become intolerable to the next. The rise of new philosophies and new systems of thought, the acquisition of new scientific facts must render their categories out of date and their conclusions inadequate. This liability to be supplanted is the price that has to be paid for the ambition to attain intellectual precision and completeness. At any moment the scientist or

systematic philosopher may be obliged to restate his position so as to incorporate new discoveries or to conform to modern ways of thinking. If the doctrinal passages in the New Testament be regarded as moving on this plane, as parts of a formal dogmatic system, they cannot be exempt from this fate. But if they be regarded rather as statements of truth akin to those moral and æsthetic judgments that we are always passing upon the world, as descriptions rather than definitions, as concerned with worship and service rather than with speculation or merely intellectual consistency, then we can hold that they will never be superseded.

Let us take an illustration of this principle. In the New Testament our Lord is designated "the Son of God." The title is obviously not a precise metaphysical definition. It enshrines the truth of the filial relationship to the Father that He exhibited in His earthly life. It contains a wealth of moral and spiritual truth, but it belongs to the plane of "mythology" rather than to that of exact thinking. When the Arians with a rigid logic deduced from the title the proposition that because He was the Son of God therefore He must be later in time than His Father, they were guilty of using the title Son as if it were an exact definition of His relation to the Father. The contradiction between the Arian theories and Christian traditional worship and belief showed plainly that the title was never intended to be used in this rigorous sense, that it contained an element of picture thinking and yet enshrined values indispensable for Christian devotion. On the other hand, the term Logos escaped these perils. St. John had introduced it in the

prologue of the Gospel, not from any metaphysical interest, but to protect the truth of the Gospel. He did not use it with the accuracy of a philosopher, but with the vagueness of popular usage. The word Logos was in the air at Ephesus, much as scientific words like "evolution" are in the air in England to-day. The Evangelist employs it much as a preacher employs "evolution," not as committing himself to a formal scientific theory, but as commending a current idea to the minds and imagination of his audience in order to illustrate a spiritual principle. There were those who identified John the Baptist with the Logos. They are deliberately corrected. It is Jesus, not John, in whom the Logos became flesh. He also wishes to claim for the light and life given through Jesus absolute reality. It is an example of that "metaphysical thirst" of religion, of which we have already spoken. Still the fact remains that in the use of the term Logos we have a closer approach to a definite philosophical terminology than in the term Son. There was a real gain, but there were also new dangers. Later Christian apologists were tempted to identify the use of the term Logos by St. John with its use by pagan philosophers, and so to bring into Christian theology with disastrous results ideas associated with the term that were purely pagan in origin. And may we not say to-day that the term Son means more for our religious life than the term Logos? We have to translate the latter into modern thought before it can be made to live. In short the more "mythological" term Son has worn better, precisely because it was less philosophical and more simply religious.

So we hold that the dogmatic statements of the New Testament are able to convey truth in a form that is as adequate for life and worship as it ever was. Their value for this purpose cannot be impaired by any advance in purely intellectual knowledge. They must always constitute the standard by which the devotion and morality of the Christian Church are to be tested. That does not mean that these statements are to be regarded as *a priori* irreformable, or exempt from criticism. Rather it explains why the examination and criticism of them by those who are morally and spiritually capable of it, have always ended in their confirmation. And it gives reasonable grounds for the expectation that they will always continue to do so.

III

DOGMA IN THE EARLY CHURCH

By the Rt. Rev. Charles Gore, D.D.

III

DOGMA IN THE EARLY CHURCH

THE Greek word "dogma"—derived from a verb meaning "to seem good" to such or such a person or persons—bore two current senses in the early Christian centuries. It meant either (1) an opinion accepted in common by any society of persons; or (2) the decision of any authoritative body. Thus (1) you hear of the "dogmas" of the Stoics; and St. Gregory of Nyssa speaks of the early chapters of Genesis as giving us "ideas (dogmas) in the form of a narrative"[1]; (2) the decrees of the Roman Senate, or later, the decrees of the emperors, are called "dogmas" (see Luke 2 [1]; and cf. Acts 15 [28], where "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" is equivalent to "this is our dogma" or authoritative decisions on a practical question). The later sense of the word "dogma," as meaning a *doctrinal* formula having the *authority* of the Church, is a specialized combination of the two formerly current senses of the word. It is in this later specialized sense that I am using the word in this paper.

I

Christianity came out into the world as a way of life —"the way." But "the Way" was based upon a

[1] *Orat. Catech.* 5.

"word of God", an authoritative self-disclosure or revelation of God, sufficiently definite to be expressed to the intelligence of men in propositions about God and His character and purpose, and in correlative propositions about man and his destiny, his sin and his redemption by the act of God. Christianity was thus from the first and essentially based on authority—on the word of God committed to the Church (see Heb. 1 [1]; 1 Thess. 2 [13]); and the Christian Church is the company of those who have received "the word of the message, even the word of God" in faith. This "message" constituted the bulk of what we hear of in the Epistles as "the tradition," which the first apostles and evangelists delivered to the Churches which they founded. It is easy to satisfy ourselves that the books of the New Testament were none of them intended to give men their primary instruction in Christianity (see Luke 1 [4]; 1 Cor. 11 [2, 23], 15 [1-3]; 1 Thess. 4 [1-2]; Heb. 2 [1-3]; James 1 [19]; 1 John 1 [7], 2 [24 ff.]; Jude 1 [3], etc.). They all presuppose "the tradition" or "the teaching to which ye were delivered," or "which was delivered to you" (Rom. 6 [18]; 1 Cor. 15 [3]). It is very profitable to read the New Testament and take careful note of what is taken for granted as already known to all the readers of the apostolic writings, though they may need to be reminded of this or that point, and to receive further enlightenment about it. Thus St. Paul reminds the Roman Christians, whom in general he had never seen or taught, about the meaning of their baptism, as about something they cannot be ignorant of (Rom. 6 [3]; cf. 7 [1]). Of "the tradition" in general he would

seem to imply that: "whether it were I or they (the Twelve), so we preach and so ye believed."

As to the content of "the tradition" or "teaching" which the books of the New Testament, taken together, presuppose, we should say (1) that it must have contained what would render intelligible the constant references to the divine names, the Father, the Son or Lord (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit, and to the life, teaching, miracles, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and to the mission of the Spirit. The virginal conception of Jesus was not part of the original message of the apostles, which referred only to the period of their personal experiences (Acts 1 [21, 22]; cp. 10 [36-42]). But it appears to have become part of "the teaching" before St. Luke wrote his Gospel. Then (as Dr. Rendel Harris says): "Everything we know of the dogmatics of the early part of the second century agrees with the belief that at that period the virginity of Mary was part of the formulated Christian belief." Again, the sacrificial value of the Lord's death was part of the "tradition" from the first (1 Cor. 15 [3]): also, of course, His triumphal return, to be the judge of quick and dead, and to inaugurate the world to come (1 Thess. 5 [2]). Probably this "burial" was from the earliest days taken to include His "descent into Hades" in the spirit (1 Peter 3 [18]). (2) It must have contained teaching about man's spiritual nature and destiny, his sinfulness and his need of redemption and the forgiveness of his sins in the case of every man; also of the resurrection of the dead and the life eternal with the warning of eternal judgment (Heb. 6 [1-2]). (3) It must have contained moral instruction such as

constituted the main part of the catechetical instruction of the early Church (1 Thess. 4 [1]). (4) It must have contained sacramental instruction—about baptism, the laying on of hands and the eucharist (Heb. 6 [1-2]; 1 Cor. 10 [16]. 11 [23]), concerning the authority of the apostolic ministry and the discipline of the Church, in principle and in certain details (1 Cor. 11 [2. 16]). Certainly knowledge of all these kinds is presupposed throughout the New Testament and formed the "apostolic tradition" of the primitive Church, and the subject-matter of the teaching given before or after baptism.

Later, again, Origen, in his great book on *First Principles*, which contained his boldest speculations, written while he was still a layman (*c.* A.D. 215 or 220), takes his stand on the teaching of the Church transmitted in orderly succession from the apostles, and remaining in the churches to the present day—of which he says: "that only is to be believed as the truth which in nothing disagrees with the ecclesiastical and apostolic tradition." He gives us a full account of what in his day the tradition contained. Dr. Bigg has thus summarized his account. It "tells us that there is one God, who created all things out of nothing, who is just and good, the author of the Old and of the New Testament, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Father before every creature, that through Him all things were made, that He is God and man, born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, that He did truly suffer, rise again and ascend into heaven; that the Holy Spirit is associated in honour and dignity with the Father and

the Son, that it is He who inspired the saints both of the Old and of the New Dispensation ; that there will be a Resurrection of the dead, then the body which is sown in corruption will be raised in incorruption, and that in the world to come the souls of men will inherit eternal life or suffer eternal punishment according to their works ; that every reasonable soul is a free agent, plotted against by evil spirits, comforted by good angels, but in no way constrained ; that the scriptures were written by the agency of the Spirit of God, that they have two senses, the plain and the hidden ; thereof the latter can be known only to whom is given the grace of the Holy Spirit in the word of wisdom and knowledge." Origen does not in this passage include either the ethical instruction, which indeed formed the chief part of the instruction of the catechumen in the early Church,[1] nor what we may call the sacramental instruction ; but if we include these elements, to which elsewhere Origen bears plain witness, and then turn to the writings of Irenæus or Tertullian we should not find much difference in the idea of the authoritative tradition in East and West ; and from very early days it found expression in baptismal creeds, which are the basis of ours. The late Fr. George Tyrrell was quite justified in saying, "I assume, with the Fathers, that the revelation given through Christ by His apostles, apart from any subsequent theological reflection, contained all that was needful for the fullest life of faith, hope and charity. . . . I find no difficulty whatever in accepting literal

[1] See F. E. Brightman's essay in *Early History of Church and Ministry*, ed. Swete, pp. 313 ff.

(not merely implicit) apostolicity, in the patristic sense, as the criterion of faith, and I cannot but regret that confusion of revelation with theology which seems to allow a development in the deposit of faith."[1] I am not yet defending this patristic conception as still tenable : I am simply recalling the indisputable fact that the Fathers did believe the function of the Church to lie simply in the handing on or defending of a tradition of truth once for all given through the apostles. St. Athanasius uses some very remarkable words distinguishing in this respect the function of the Church as regards discipline and as regards doctrine. He is looking back upon the Council of Nicæa. "With reference to Easter," he says, "such and such things were determined (ἔδοξεν) and at such a date, for at that time it was determined that all should obey a certain rule : but with reference to the faith they wrote not 'such and such things were determined,' but 'thus the Catholic Church believes.' And they added immediately the statement of their faith, to show that their judgment was not new but apostolic, and that what they wrote was not any discovery of theirs, but was what the Apostles taught."[2]

Some recent writers, such as Canon Raven in his *Apollinarianism*, and Dr. Kirk in his essay on the development of the Trinitarian doctrine, have written very instructively about certain phases of controversy in the early Church, as between an Adoptionist and an Incarnationist conception of Christ, and a Binitarian and a Trinitarian tendency in theology. No doubt

[1] *Through Scylla and Charybdis*, pp. 324–5.
[2] *De Synodis* 5.

there was an Adoptionist theology and a Binitarian tendency in the early centuries; and, had it been merely a matter for speculation as between rival schools, either "school" might have won. But what they fail to see is that the issue of the controversy is predetermined by "the tradition." The aberrations of individuals were due sometimes to the fascination of the current philosophical doctrine of the divine "word" or "reason"; sometimes to other causes. But neither Adoptionism nor Binitarianism could have survived or been permanently tolerated so long as the Church held to its tradition, which was rooted in the threefold name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, and the incarnation of the Son. Later—in the fourth and fifth centuries—when the Councils were adopting definitions of doctrine, there can be no doubt that the Fathers of the Councils would have repudiated the idea that they were making any addition to the faith. Three things, in fact, are to be noted about those who took part in the Councils. (1) They were not behaving as philosophers in search of the truth: but as guardians of a sacred tradition of revealed truth to be handed down through the generations. No one can read the Fathers in bulk and doubt this. Athanasius, for example, in his earliest books, written before the Council, shows some enthusiasm for current philosophy; but in all his long-continued struggle against Arianism and its offshoots, all his energy is directed to vindicating a tradition out of ancient scriptures and in the light of its practical implications. (2) They had no conception that they were enlarging the tradition: their purpose was purely negative—to say no to certain

tendencies of thought, which would have undermined the faith which they inherited. They may even be said —at least at starting—to have regarded the definitions as necessary evils. (3) Their choice of terms was not determined by philosophical considerations, but by the necessity of finding the best terms they could to guard the imperilled belief in the Triune Being of God and the real Incarnation of the Eternal Son; and to this end they adopted current terms, indeed, but stamped them in part with a new significance. I am not, I say, here discussing the question whether the Fathers were in any way mistaken. I am only emphasizing their absolutely conservative intention. They believed that a real revelation—a real word of God—had been committed to the Church by the apostles, to which nothing could be added, but from which nothing must be taken away. This idea of the tradition which prevailed throughout the early centuries[1] was emphasized with admirable skill in the Commonitorium of Vincent of Lerins, the author of the famous formula that the true tradition is that only which is to be found *ubique*—that is in all parts of the Christian Church, *semper*—that is from the beginning of Christian history, and *ab omnibus*—that is as the common mind of the Church and not the opinion merely of isolated individuals, however distinguished. (Here he is no

[1] It may well be that there were outlying Christian communities which arose under Jewish influences in the very earliest days, and remaining outside the influences of St. Paul and St. John never held the full tradition. The Epistle to the Hebrews and the *Didaché* suggest such communities. Some may have become Ebionite: some may have relapsed into Judaism. But we know nothing for certain of them and they did not affect the course of Christian history.

doubt glancing at the extreme doctrine of the effects of the Fall, and the one-sided predestinarianism, of St. Augustine, without naming him.)

II

From the first then the Christian Church took a strictly conservative and limited view of its function as regards doctrine—it was a trustee for an apostolic tradition and no more. But this retrospective view of its function became more definite when (from the end of the second century) the Canon of the New Testament came to be formed and recognized. There can be no question that the intention of the Church in the formation of the Canon was to include all the writings which could be called "apostolic" and no more. The Gospels of Mark and Luke and the Acts were admitted as written by companions of Peter and Paul and as having thus apostolic authority, the Epistle to the Hebrews as being in some sense Pauline. As to the Apocalypse, Eusebius implies that if it were not by John the Apostle it would fall out of the Canon. (To-day, in the light of modern criticism, we can say that there are no surviving writings which can fairly be called apostolic which are not included in the Canon; and we can fairly say also, with Harnack, that, with the one exception of 2 Peter, there is none of the books included that can be pronounced in the strictest sense of the word pseudonymous.) Then it was assumed from the first formation of the Canon that nothing should be regarded as belonging to the apostolic tradition which

could not be "proved by the Scriptures," i.e. especially by the New Testament. Origen lays it down as a thing indisputable. And there was no demurrer which makes itself heard in the orthodox Church. There appears to be no single instance of a non-scriptural tradition being aligned with Scripture as an independent authority, where the context does not show conclusively that the non-scriptural authority is only alleged in regard to matters of discipline or religious practice—not with regard to doctrine. "The Church to teach, the Bible to prove," and to be the ultimate court of appeal, becomes at once the universally accepted maxim in the Church of the Fathers, Eastern and Western. And not only the teachers of the Church were to have regard to this Canon. All the faithful were encouraged to verify what they were taught in the Scriptures. St. Chrysostom would have each household provide itself with a family Bible, if not a complete one. St. Cyril's phrase in his catechetical lectures: "Do not believe me simply, unless you receive the proof of what I say from Holy Scripture," would apparently have met with no objection anywhere.

The Fathers might have been asked "How do you know that there is no really apostolic tradition of doctrine which escaped being referred to in the apostolic writings—writings which after all appear to be casual productions?" The question does not appear to have been asked. But if it had been asked, as it has been asked in modern days, the Fathers might have given this reply—There is no direct answer to your question. But the Church has always resented and refused the Gnostic idea of a secret tradition. It has

always appealed to the open tradition as it has existed especially in the apostolic sees. And if you examine these traditions you will find that in fact there has been nothing doctrinal handed down as apostolic, and nothing which can be said to have been taught *ubique, semper, ab omnibus*—which is not in fact confirmed in Scripture. It is to be noted also that Augustine suggests (and later, Thomas Aquinas confirms the suggestion) that the "proof" must be found in the literal sense of Scripture and not in any (real or supposed) "mystical meaning." Thus we are not to quote Ecclesiastes 11 [3] as a proof of the everlastingness of punishment or Ezekiel 44 [2] for the perpetual virginity of Mary.

This intensely conservative restriction upon the dogmatic authority of the Church lasted till the breakdown of civilization in the West. We hear a new note sounded by Gregory the Great, the man whose word was law through the Dark Ages. In his Dialogues he terrifies his docile interlocutor, Peter, with a series of blood-curdling ghost stories containing reports given by tortured spirits of the terrors of hell or of purgatory. These stories, it is not too much to say, became one of the chief foundations on which the mediæval teaching about hell or purgatory was based. And when Peter naïvely asks Gregory how it came about that so much (confessedly) new information about the other world had been revealed to man, the answer was, in effect, that the end of the world was very near and the veil which hid the other world had grown so thin that more of its secrets had disclosed themselves. The Western Church later repudiated the idea that any

Church doctrine could be based on visions granted to individuals. But this valuable restriction came too late. There was nothing about purgatory in the original tradition.[1] That is manifest on examination: and Scripture is markedly silent. But the doctrine with tremendous consequences had taken the strongest hold before the dawn of the mediæval Renaissance. At the time of the Berengarian controversy, when the doctrine of transubstantiation became authoritative in the eleventh century, all sense of an appeal to Scripture, as distinct from the undiscriminating appeal to "documents of authority," seems to have vanished. It showed signs of recovery in the scholastic period; but the Church already stood committed to doctrines about purgatory, and indulgences applicable to souls in purgatory, and to a Marian legend, which it could not repudiate; and so it came about that "tradition" at Trent was proclaimed an independent source of revealed truth side by side with Scripture. Later, as the Papal claim developed under the mighty influence of the Jesuits, the whole idea of an appeal to ancient tradition against the living voice of authority, to correct or to control it, came under suspicion of heresy. The official doctrine of Rome is, I believe, still that the present authoritative teaching of the Roman Church is the same in substance as that of the ancient Church, neither more nor less. But the Roman Catholic theologians and historians of discernment know that this position cannot hold. Thus Franzelin and Batiffol, for example, expressly repudiate the limiting rule of

[1] That is, there was nothing about purgatory as distinct from hell. Some of the Fathers regarded hell as purgatorial.

Vincent. That rule, however, remained beloved of would-be reformers before the Reformation, and of the Gallicans in France; and at the Reformation it became specially identified with the Anglican Church. When the Anglican Church causes its ministers to vow that they are persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, and are determined to teach nothing as part of the necessary faith but that which they are persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scriptures, it is faithfully following the lead of the Fathers.

III

Hitherto I have been attempting merely a summary or historical statement of the deeply conservative idea of "the tradition" of Christian doctrine which appears in the Fathers. I do not think it is open to dispute that this *was* their idea, so that they would refuse to recognize any addition to or expansion of the substance of the revelation or Word of God which had been given in its fulness in Jesus Christ and which had been proclaimed under a special inspiration of the Holy Spirit by the apostles. But this patristic idea does not at all satisfy large classes of modern theologians and critics—Romanists and Modernists. To attend first only to the latter—it is contended that this patristic conception of "the apostles," as having delivered unanimously an identical message, such as is represented in Origen's summary quoted above, is a more or less mythical conception. What we get, in fact, in the New Testament

is no doubt mainly the final doctrine of Paul and "John" (not to be identified with the Son of Zebedee); and Paulinism has coloured even the Synoptic Gospels. But this doctrine of the Incarnation of the pre-existing —or even eternal—Son or Word of God was by no means that of the Twelve in the earliest Jerusalem Church, of which we get the best representation in Peter's preaching in the early chapters of the Acts. This appears still in St. Paul's earlier writings, and it is only in his later epistles that the Incarnation doctrine appears clearly. Again, there is confusion both in St. Paul and St. John between the doctrine of the Son or Word incarnate and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. They lie side by side unreconciled. What we find in historical fact is that the first disciples of Jesus, who had been convinced by their visions that Jesus was raised from the dead, under the pressure of Jewish apocalyptic expectations, which probably Jesus himself entertained, preached a doctrine of the glorification of the human person, whom they had known, and who had been crucified, but who had been raised to heaven by the miraculous act of God, and who was to come again very speedily to judge the old world and introduce the Kingdom of God. This was the first development—which survived in what was later known as Adoptionism; and it is this which could most truly be called "the creed of the Apostles." Later St. Paul's brilliant genius gradually, and under Hellenistic influences, suggested the idea of the Incarnation and of the Sacramental Church, which, as it was more distinctly developed by John, became the Creed of the Catholic Church: but even so, the conception is only

a stage in a development which culminated at Chalcedon, and which, in its earlier no less than in its latest form, has no real claim to be called the creed of the Apostles collectively regarded, and still less claim to be called the religion of Jesus.

This theory or group of theories of the origins of Christian doctrine is, of course, thoroughly agreeable to the whole evolutionary conception which possesses the modern mind. But nothing has become more evident in the course of the twentieth century than that many rash conclusions have been drawn from the general idea of evolution which exacter examination refuses to confirm. There is nothing in sound philosophy, or in science properly so-called, which justifies an *a priori* refusal to contemplate the possibility of a gradual self-disclosure of God, especially through the prophets of Israel, reaching a final culmination in the incarnation of the eternal Son or Word of God in the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth. It is, of course, a tremendous proposition, which cannot be argued here. It is the foundation faith of historical Christianity, justified, we believe, by the historical evidence and confirmed by a spiritual experience, deep and wide and long extended. Again we deny that legitimate historical criticism justifies the idea that the Synoptic Gospels give us only a "Jesus myth," and not the real Jesus of history. On the contrary, it justifies the belief that they give us substantially the authentic memory of Peter and others, the eye-witnesses; and we deny that the Jesus of the Gospels admits of a merely humanitarian interpretation. Even the estimate of the fourth Gospel as a piece of Hellenistic idealization has been

disproved by more careful criticism, and we are bound to admit that it contains an authentic historical tradition from "the beloved disciple," supplementary to that of the Synoptics. Again, we deny that the substance of St. Paul's gospel was affected by Hellinism. Historical criticism justifies the assertion that the idea of the Church and of the sacraments reposes upon the teaching and instruction of Christ. We can find no signs in the New Testament that there was any rival theory of Christ to be set against St. Paul's doctrine of the Incarnation, and we find substantially the same doctrine of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in St. Paul and St. John. There was no doubt in the early Church an expectation, which St. Paul certainly shared, and which experience proved to be false, that Christ's return would be immediate. We see St. Paul abandoning this expectation—which he clearly did not consider to be part of "the tradition" to be handed on in the Churches, for he shows no hesitation in revising his earlier hopes; and in the Apocalypse and the Johannine writings generally we see how the failure of the first expectation did not at all modify the conviction that at last Jesus was to "come again" in glory. Nor can the ground of the expectation of an *immediate* end of the world be legitimately attributed to Jesus Himself. Apart, then, from certain opinions connected with this expectation which we see St. Paul abandoning, we can detect no change in his "gospel" or in "the tradition" which he delivered to the churches of his foundation.[1]

[1] I cannot, of course, argue these positions here. I may be allowed to refer to *Can We Then Believe*, app. note 16, p. 223, for

Now we will try to state the "development" of Christian doctrine as history seems to present itself in the apostolic age. There was a great deal in the teaching of Jesus which passed the understanding of the Twelve at the time when they heard it, but which nevertheless did not so pass from their memory that their later experience under the influence of the Holy Spirit could not recall it. But in the first days, after the conviction of the Resurrection had been forced upon them, and after the experience of Pentecost, their whole souls were absorbed in the one transfigurising thought of the exaltation of their crucified Master to

an examination more or less in detail of Dr. Ernest F. Scott's *Spirit in the New Testament*, in which the idea of discrepant tendencies in the body of Pauline and Johannine theology is prominent. I am at the moment beginning to study a book on *The Incarnate Lord*, by Fr. Lionel Thornton, of which I desire to speak with all respect, but in which I find on p. 293 a theory of the conflict of ideas within the writings of St. Paul and St. John, which seems to me contrary to the evidence. Thus (1) I see no difference between the doctrine of Christ in the prologue of St. John and that implied in the discourses, save that "the Son" of the discourses is called "the Word" throughout the prologue until the last verse. Possibly even there is not called "the Son," but "God only begotten." True, the Lord does not in the discourses, except perhaps once, speak of His cosmic work, but there is no fair doubt about His pre-existence and essential unity with God. Again (2) I can see no contrast between an earlier doctrine of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, Romans 5, and Philippians 2 (the Pre-Existent Man) and a later doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son to whom the cosmic functions are assigned. In the first of the epistles named, 1 Corinthians 8[6], the cosmic function in the whole of creation is assigned to the one Lord Jesus Christ as a matter of course and quite incidentally. St. Paul's doctrine throughout is quite harmonious. Nor can I believe that any justification has been shown for an interpretation of Philippians 2 other than Lightfoot's. The critics on whom Fr. Thornton relies appear to me to have an eye for differences which is too microscopic and a singularly blind eye for more conspicuous unities.

the throne of the world as Christ and Lord, and of the glorious gospel entrusted to them in the power of the Spirit which He had given them. From the first it would appear that they worshipped Christ. Those who "call upon His name" is a synonym for the Church, and this no doubt implies His divinity. But as far as our evidence goes, they had not begun to answer the question how this could be, consistently with the Monotheism to which, no doubt, they clung. So far as we know, it lay in the providence of God that Saul, the persecutor turned apostle, should show the older apostles the only answer possible for those who were to maintain the belief in one God, as the only object of worship. It was the doctrine of the Incarnation of the eternal Son of God, which St. Paul clearly enunciates in his Epistles of the Captivity, but hardly less clearly implies in his earlier epistles. St. Paul certainly believed this doctrine to be matter of divine revelation. Exactly how it formed itself in his mind is not made plain to us. But we contend with justice that it is the only explanation which fits the facts, as given us in the Synoptists as well as in St. John. And it appears to have been accepted without hesitation or controversy by the Church. We know amazingly little about the Twelve, other than Peter and John in his later years. But when St. Paul says "so we preach" (i.e. all the apostles, including himself) he implies an unanimity in the tradition they gave the Church. The doctrine of the Incarnation is assuredly implied in the Epistle of James, which is very un-Pauline, and in the First Epistle of Peter, and in the Apocalypse.[1]

[1] See *Reconstruction of Belief*, pp. 420–426.

To speak of the earliest teaching of Peter as "adoptionist" is quite unjustified. It would simply appear that the apostle's first teaching was concentrated upon the one point of the glorified Man—in whose name they trusted as the one name of salvation, and on whose name they called. Whether they (St. John, for example) had already in their minds further thought about His person we cannot securely determine, but at any rate St. Paul's interpretation they appear to have accepted as a matter of course. Further, when we examine all the articles of "the tradition" as Origen gives them, we cannot see one which goes beyond "the teaching" as the apostolic epistles imply it, save that perhaps the last item has a somewhat specially Alexandrian flavour. There are other articles about Church and sacraments and ministry which Origen might have enumerated and which certainly were in the Church tradition from apostolic days. On the whole, then, we should judge that the patristic idea that the final self-revelation of God as given in Jesus was by Him entrusted to the apostles, including St. Paul, and that they were so inspired by the Spirit as that the content of the message should be by them faithfully declared or committed to the Church is an idea which enquiry confirms. Certainly it is the conception of the apostolic office which St. John intends us to hold.[1]

There is nothing unreasonable in this primitive conception of the function of the Holy Spirit in the minds of the apostles as being "to lead them into all the truth," and "to bring all things to their remem-

[1] John 14 [25], 15 [25], 16 [13].

brance whatsoever Jesus said to them." When we come to think of it, is it easy to imagine that, if it was God's gracious will to give to mankind a full revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ, He should have allowed its first delivery to the world to be in fact fundamentally erroneous or incomplete? Is not the constant belief of the Church that the inspiration of the apostles by the Holy Spirit was a plenary inspiration of a higher kind than was given to subsequent generations, so that their teaching should be normative for all ages, a quite reasonable belief? Is it not justified by the evidence of the sub-apostolic literature? We have in reality no cause to be ashamed of the patristic distinction, as Fr. Tyrrell states it, between "the deposit of faith" and all subsequent theology.

There is another remark which needs to be made. It is the fashion to talk about the appeal to "proof texts" of the Scripture, as an old-fashioned appeal to be deprecated by modern enlightenment. This is surely senseless. No doubt "proof texts" may be, and have been, wrongly quoted by fathers and mediævals and Protestants and by modern critics. For instance, "He shall lead you into all truth," "The Lord is the Spirit," "The letter killeth and the Spirit giveth life," are proof texts sadly misused by modern critics. But the misuse of texts from the Bible, or from any classical authors, does not justify the depreciation of texts as such. All historians who write about Aristotle's theology must quote a certain famous proof text from the *Metaphysics*. All writers on ancient educational theory must quote certain proof texts from Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*. So all Christian theologians must

quote proof texts, which should be no doubt critically chosen, from the New Testament. But undoubtedly when St. Paul (in 1 Cor. 8 6-7 or in Col. 1 14-20 or in Phil. 2 2-11) made a statement about the cosmic function and eternal being of the Son he was making a deliberate statement which he meant to become a "proof text" of his teaching.

My contention then is that "the tradition" as it lies before us in Origen or Irenæus adds nothing to "the teaching of the Apostles" as it is given us in the New Testament. Again, it is certain, as I have said, that the Fathers of the fourth and fifth and following centuries claimed that, when they were formulating their definitions as regards the Triune Being of God or the person of the Son, they were adding nothing new to the tradition but simply making it explicit and guarding it, by fencing off as prohibited certain misinterpretations which would have destroyed its very substance. In Vincent of Lerins' words they were "stamping with the speciality of a new term an article of the faith that was not new."

They had no new information about divine things to convey. For positive information they referred the Church back to the New Testament. Surely they were wise in so doing. In later days, when men had lost the true distinction between the function of church councils or popes and the function of Scripture, they did use the dogmas of councils *as independent sources of information* and argued freely from them. Thus they argued that because the Son, as God, is omniscient, therefore Jesus during His mortal life was omniscient, whatever the Gospels might say or imply to the contrary, or

again that He could not, as being God, have exercised faith, or experienced uncertainty, or prayed as one who needed enlightenment. Such became the unscriptural, but authoritative, doctrine of the Western Church through the misuse of the definitions as primary sources of information about the Christ. But limit them to their true use and they are valuable indeed. They are as necessary now as ever before. They protect the faith of Scripture. But for our positive knowledge about God or the Incarnation they direct us back to the apostolic writings. The revelation of God as given to the world through the apostles was final and is the whole of what we can expect to receive.

IV

But then, it is asked, is there to be no development in theology. Yes, by all means, but in theology not in dogma. God's revelation of Himself is not confined to that of which the Bible gives us the record. He reveals Himself in nature, in art, in science, in history, in all that makes up "a civilization" rightly understood. Thus it is a function of the church in each new phase of human experience, standing firmly on its "tradition," to enter boldly into the thought or imagination and art or science of its time, discriminating, adapting, appropriating, or rejecting, and so fashioning its theology, which will be in a measure different for every epoch and for every country. The theology of the Fathers in the age of Hellenistic philosophy, and that of the Mediævals in the world of "logic," and that of to-day in

the world of science, will present characteristic differences. The theology of the Indian church, or the Chinese church of the future, will be, and should be, widely different, and expressed in different categories. But it should be based on the same creed—on the same fundamental facts. And from this point of view it appears evident that, while the Church would lose its essential spiritual power if it were to desert its foundation creed, it should be as free to develop and re-develop its philosophy and its theology as the atmosphere of each age and country requires of it. All these developments, if legitimately Christian and Catholic, will have the central characteristics which the Creed and sacramental system of the Church impose: but also great differences. And, that the Church may exhibit its maximum of power to represent the catholic faith in the manner best suited to each age and country, it is essential, as Erasmus said, that its necessary creed should consist of "the fewest possible articles."

This paper is written in vindication of the ancient or characteristically Anglican rule of faith, and it is not written in criticism of Rome. But it is obvious to most of us that the Roman development, and especially its development of the dogmatic requirements, renders the religion it presents less and less liberal and adaptable. It is a one-sided development of the principle of authority and regimentation both in practical discipline and in dogma. It demands belief, which is to be as assured as belief in God or in Christ, for a doctrine about purgatory, about Mary and the saints, about the manner of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, about the position and authority of the

Pope, which can only be demanded if the Church of these latter days has come to know by divine revelation a great deal of which the ancient church had no knowledge, or on which, if it spoke at all, it was with a divided voice or in a tone which implied that it had no revelation. The Roman Church has revolted against the ancient appeal to Scripture as the testing ground of all dogmatic requirements. Thus the faith which it requires of its subjects is a blind faith, which is a quite different thing from the faith we find described in the New Testament and the ancient church. Surely this is not the kind of development which ought to command our adhesion? Surely it is impossible to think that the religion of Christ was meant to become narrower, less comprehensive, and less tolerant than it was at its inception. But in appealing to the Christianity of the New Testament or of the early centuries we are certainly appealing to something more tolerant, more suited to free men, and more able to respond to what is best in the best men of all ages and nations.

In our own church of to-day there are some among us who are by no means prepared to accept the heavy yoke of Roman authority but who find great attraction in practices of devotion which find no authoritative sanction except in the Roman system; and they appeal not to authoritative dogma but to *experience*. They do not base the practices they love on a basis of dogmatic requirements, but rather on their profitableness as proved in the spiritual experience of masses of Christians. But experience can be appealed to in many different directions. If, for instance, Protestantism is accused of having violated the Catholic Order, it

appeals to a vast experience to justify what it regards as a legitimate rebellion. The Friends again, who have rejected the whole principle of Church authority and the sacramental principle as a whole, make an appeal to experience which those who know them best find very impressive. A number of newer movements, more revolutionary still, but calling themselves Christian, appeal to their spiritual experiences. It seems evident that if we are sickened of our sects and divisions, and desire to return to the idea of the one Catholic Church as representing of a certainty the will of the Lord for His people, there must be some principle of reasonable authority to regulate practice as well as belief. We may desire to give as large liberty as we can to "pious opinions" and to practices of devotion which do not contravene the fundamental faith: but such voluntary practices, appealing only to pious opinion, must be very careful to make no claim for themselves such as implies that those who do not hold with them are less worthy of the name of Catholic than those who do, nor must they obtrude themselves in the public services which are meant to be free to all who hold the Common Creed. Further than this, must not pious opinions, if they are to remain pious, be constantly careful to test themselves by the apostolic standard?

V

Finally, we must seek to find our answer to the claim that the "critical treatment" of the Bible invalidates the ancient rule of faith. There is, then, no doubt, a treatment of the Bible and especially of the New Tes-

tament, which arrogates to itself the name of "critical," and does in fact deprive us of the right to appeal to the Bible at all as the record of a divine and final revelation. But it is a criticism which is not reasonable nor open-minded, but which finds its dominant motive in a rejection of the idea of the supernatural or the miraculous, and of a real self-disclosure of God to man conveyed to us in a historical process. But criticism that can really claim to be scientific does not invalidate the belief that "God in many parts and many manners spake in old times unto the Fathers by the prophets"; nay, it seems to me to throw into higher relief the really divine inspiration of the prophets and the evidence that the Spirit of God was really fashioning among the Jews, as nowhere else, an image of the divine Redeemer and of the religion for all mankind on which Jesus built and which he fulfilled. More than this the ancient rule of faith does not require. Though no doubt the Christian Church widely accepted from the Jews the idea that divine inspiration of the Scriptures meant divine dictation of all the records, mercifully the Church never sought to bind its members to this, to us an impossible, idea. But, of course, it is upon the field of the New Testament that the question we are discussing becomes really serious. The Rule of Faith does undoubtedly postulate —not that the Gospels are infallible in detail, but that they do give us true history—a true account of Jesus—His birth, His ministry, His teaching, His miracles, His death, His Resurrection, His Ascension; that the Acts again gives a true history of the first development of the Church; and that the Epistles present

us really with an apostolic teaching which is concordant in effect, and justifies "the tradition" as it appears in the later second and third centuries. Now, of course, the abandonment of the idea, which had so long held possession of the Church, that the inspiration of the writers of the New Testament by the Holy Spirit involved their infallibility and bound us to accept every phrase as dictated by God, was in effect a deeply disturbing abandonment; and it is certainly true that we have by no means steadied ourselves afresh upon the newly constructed critical ground. But it is not the case that the more destructive kind of criticism of the New Testament has shown or is showing that it has the best of the argument. The more destructive kind of criticism finds in the Gospel not an authentic record of Jesus reposing upon the statement of the first witnesses, but a Jesus myth gradually developed in constant retelling, over some fifty years. And it is quite true that on this showing no really historical picture of Jesus can be presented. Dr. Edwyn Bevan is quite right in saying that "critical researches into the Gospels have made it clear that if it [the Gospel story] is not true, we are forced to the conclusion that the Gospel account of words and actions of Jesus so transfigures and falsifies the historical reality that any reconstruction of the real Jesus behind the documents will be too conjectural and arbitrary to make it worth while for men to go on calling themselves His followers." But real criticism does not lead us to accept the myth-theory. The great historian of antiquity, Eduard Meyer—who is as completely detached as possible from any orthodox

prejudices—concludes his examination of St. Mark thus —"The conclusion we have won is of the highest importance. It is evident that for our knowledge of the history of Jesus we have by no means to reckon merely with representations of the Second, sub-apostolic generation, but are taken back far behind that into the midst of the first generation who personally had known him intimately (*genau*) and still preserved a living recollection of him; and that these oldest recollections lie under our eye in manifold forms. There is no ground at all for refusing to accept these oldest traditions as historically trustworthy in all essentials, and in their chronological ordering of the history." No doubt our degree of belief in the records will depend upon whether the idea of the divine Redeemer is credible to us. But as far as historical evidence, strictly considered, goes, the Gospels supply us with the firm foundation for the belief in Jesus which appears in the Epistles and in the Creeds of the Church.

Again, there is no doubt a kind of criticism which is excessively alive to the differences between the points of view of the different authors of the New Testament books outside the Gospels, and which magnifies their different points of view into essential differences of doctrine, or finds within St. Paul's and St. John's writings, taken separately, an unreconciled conflict between two alien points of view; but if criticism means sound "judgment," and we are content to remember that the writers of the New Testament were neither scholastic definers nor modern critics, but men of deep spiritual convictions using common

human language to convey their message to common men, we shall not, on examination, find ourselves impressed with the "proofs" of antagonistic ideas destroying the presumed unity of the New Testament, or of any change in fundamental doctrine between earlier and later writings of the same author.

In a word it seems to us that the idea on which the Church tradition reposes—that we are given in the New Testament the true picture of Jesus, as the first witnesses gave it, and that they were truly inspired to retain and to present that true picture, and that the doctrine of Jesus and of the Spirit presented in the New Testament is really a concordant Gospel and has *implicit*, but clearly distinguishable in it, the doctrine of the Incarnation and of the Holy Trinity as the later Church delivered it and formulated it—this idea or complex of ideas has nothing to fear from legitimate criticism; and we of the Anglican Church can still maintain our appeal not only to ancient tradition but also to the Bible, and to the New Testament especially, as the testing ground for all doctrines which claim to impose themselves with authority on the Christian conscience, or even for doctrines which less authoritatively claim our acceptance on the ground of spiritual experience.

IV

DOGMA IN MEDIÆVAL SCHOLASTICISM

By Richard Hanson, M.A., B.D.

IV

DOGMA IN MEDIÆVAL SCHOLASTICISM

"*DEUM et animam scire cupio. Nihilne plus? Nihil omnino.*" "I desire to know God and the soul. Nothing more? Nothing at all." These are not the words of a mediæval scholastic. They were written by St. Augustine nearly nine hundred years before St. Thomas Aquinas was born: but they are prophetic. That all truth was contained in the perception of the God whom Jesus Christ revealed was for Augustine the supreme affirmation of the human spirit and the ultimate conviction of the human mind. With all the passion of the creative artist, with all the fervour of the Christian saint, with all the subtle profundity of the intellectual genius, in his life, in his work, in the eleven closely printed tomes which embody his literary output, he asserted, he argued, he reiterated, he investigated in all its bearings the thesis that the proper study of mankind is God. This is the Augustine who dominated the Middle Age, who stimulated the Reformers, who was still the acknowledged master of Hooker in the sixteenth and of Pascal and Bossuet in the seventeenth century even after the reaction had begun. It was the eighteenth century which insisted that the proper study of mankind is man, and the nineteenth which, in deliberate

and conscious antagonism to Augustine, associated the knowledge of mankind, not with the knowledge of God but with the knowledge of nature, and so discovered man's natural affinity with the beasts that perish. It will not be denied that the twentieth century has demonstrated and is demonstrating in word and deed how exceedingly beastly man can be. It is not, of course, that the twentieth century man is really more beastly than the mediæval man. It is only that he has ceased to hear the voice of God and he has to all appearance ceased to be ashamed.

It is nearly a millennium and a half since Augustine lived. During the first millennium the programme of Augustine was the dominant factor in the development of human culture. Whether or not it was always a conscious and deliberate discipleship, it was a persistent and all-pervasive effort to grasp and interpret all knowledge in the light with which knowledge of the God and father of Jesus Christ illumines the human soul. It is Augustine who is dominant, not necessarily or not at all what came to be known in the schools as Augustinianism. After all Augustinianism was an opinion, Augustine was a fact. One of the indelible marks of the supremely great man is that his precise opinions upon particular details are comparatively negligible. It is second- and third-rate persons who must always be right, and they are generally very conscious of it. What further claim have they upon our attention? Augustine always has been and always will be beyond comparison greater than Augustinianism.

Towards the end of the first millennium following

Augustine's death, at the culminating epoch of the Middle Age, in and about the thirteenth century and in close connection with the schools of the newly founded universities in Paris, Oxford and elsewhere there arose, and for a couple of centuries or so flourished, that school of philosophical theologians which we know by the name of Mediæval Scholastics. The name is apt to be misleading, for much mediæval philosophy and theology was not scholastic at least in method, and there has been an abundance of Scholasticism which is not mediæval at all. Nevertheless the name suffices. It serves at least to indicate the most complete and systematic self-expression which the Middle Age achieved. It may claim to be much more. It may be claimed that Mediæval Scholasticism in the work of its chief exponents, Aquinas, say, or a Dante, is the most consistent and profound effort to organize, to express, and to interpret, all available human knowledge in the light of the Christian revelation which the world has yet seen. That much of the supposed knowledge which they so organized and interpreted is now and has for long been found to be erroneous and obsolete is relatively unimportant. The spirit in which they faced the problem with which they were presented, the principles which guided them, the main outlines at least of the result which they achieved are, or should be, for the Christian Church a possession for ever.

By the fortunate concatenation of events or by the overruling of kindly Providence the very nature of the problem which faced them, combined with the profound and unshaken convictions in which those

problems were faced, served to bring to full and adequate expression, for all time as one might suppose, the basic principles, the inevitable presuppositions of any philosophy of revealed religion. The fact that Christianity, at least in its traditional form, demands not merely a philosophy of religion as such (of which there has never been any lack) but a philosophy of *revealed* religion has been and is frequently obscured even when it has not been implicitly and categorically denied. The most characteristic and most fundamental feature of the Scholastic philosophy is precisely this, that for the first time, this inherent implicit claim of Christianity is explicitly formulated, and not merely recognized, but made the guiding principle in a comprehensive survey of the whole of human knowledge, human attainment and human aspiration. For the Scholastic the Christian faith is not the best that man has been fortunate enough and skilful enough to discover about God : it is the best that God has yet been pleased to reveal to man. There is in the very nature and constitution of the universe, as apprehended by the Christian, this twofold activity : an activity of the parts on the one hand, consciously or unconsciously, to apprehend and enjoy the Ultimate Being which is the source and ground of the whole : this is the activity known to us in its highest form in the conscious achievement of the human mind and spirit in its search for rational and moral truth : there is an activity on the other hand of the Ultimate Being, the source and ground of the whole, in direct revelation of Himself for the salvation and beatification of those parts which are by their constitution capable of receiving it :

this is the activity which we identify, recognize and embrace in the Christian revelation. On the recognition of this twofold activity (and on the maintenance of the fundamental distinction between the two as essentially different in kind) the whole structure of Scholastic philosophy and theology as the philosophy and theology of specifically revealed religion is founded and built: and to the maintenance (at all costs) of the fundamental distinction between the two activities as essentially different in kind most of the characteristic features of Scholasticism may be traced.

All human knowledge is knowledge of God, knowledge at least of His works and ways, all truth is ultimately the truth of God who is the Truth. But there is a distinction which is vital for Scholasticism, vital as they claimed for the adequate presentation of the Christian faith, though to us it may seem untenable and unwarranted: the distinction is that between the *lumen naturale*, the natural light of the human intellect, assisted indeed by God, for God is the ultimate source and the providential guardian of all activity whatsoever, and the *revelatio dei*, divine revelation where initiative and activity are wholly divine, and man is wholly receptive. The *lumen naturale* and the *revelatio dei* always distinguishable and distinct, not antagonistic to one another but supplementary—on this distinction and its implications the whole vast structure of Scholastic philosophy and theology is founded and built.

In this sense of the term dualism Scholasticism then is essentially dualistic. It is fundamental and all-pervasive. There is dualism in the epistemology or

theory of knowledge in the distinction between revelation and reason: there is dualism in the ontology or theory of being in the distinction between God and creation: there is dualism in the anthropology or theory of man in the distinction between nature and grace, and there are many others. But to each of these three characteristic expressions of the one essential dualism, more detailed reference must be made with some attempt to indicate more precisely their significance for theology and philosophy. But since any trace of dualism is generally sufficient in these days to brand any philosophy, which may manifest it as, *ipso facto*, mistaken and therefore negligible, and since in particular the Scholastics are very commonly held up to reprobation as particularly flagrant examples of the one unpardonable philosophic sin, it may be well to devote a little attention to this matter at this stage, and to define more in detail the precise nature of the problem which faced the Christian thinker of the thirteenth century.

The classic age in the formulation and definition of Christian dogma was long since passed. It came to an end in effect with the promulgation of the definition of Chalcedon in 451. The Middle Age did little or nothing either in the way of deliberate addition or of further definition to modify or amplify the central doctrinal statements which it inherited from the theologians, mainly Greek theologians, of the fourth and fifth centuries. The dominating influence of St. Augustine, it is true, effected a profound reorientation of the dogmatic system, as has been noted at the outset. By his overwhelming emphasis upon the thirst of the

individual soul for God, by his rediscovery of the satisfaction of that thirst in the intimate knowledge of God as revealed by Christ, by his insistence upon the supernatural grace which can alone impart the benefits of Christ to man, he set a problem and a task to the mediæval Church which absorbed its energies for centuries. It was not a task which involved the further definition or restatement of fundamental dogma. It was a task which involved their acceptance, their application, their systematic presentation and assimilation by a civilization rapidly sinking into chaos. He modified the key, he did not alter the fundamental melody. The Middle Age was a receptive not a critical age : it sought and found its inspiration for the most part in the past. So it came to be that in the age of Aquinas there existed a vast and fairly systematic body of beliefs, traditions and practices, some of them authoritatively defined, some received but venerated opinions, some merely traditional practices, but all together claiming to be and accepted as being the embodiment and expression of the Christian Revelation. There is one great corpus of knowledge. It was accepted by the Scholastics without question or demur. It is *the* truth *par excellence :* truth divinely revealed in the sacred Scriptures, and guaranteed and interpreted by the divinely guided popes and councils, and doctors of the Church : the heritage of the ages.

The peculiar and significant feature of the Scholastic problem is that they had also in their possession and were passionately devoted students of a second corpus of knowledge, which made an equal though not similar claim to be accepted by all men to be the truth, a

corpus of knowledge which was in fact older than the Christian revelation but which in the thirteenth century was new to the men of the Middle Ages, the whole surviving works of Aristotle.

Here, then, are two great bodies of knowledge, one claiming to be the truth as revealed by God and appealing to and demanding human faith : the other claiming to be the highest deliverances of the human reason and appealing to and demanding the allegiance of the human intellect. Which of them is to receive our adherence, and if they conflict which must in the last resort be modified or even in this or that particular abandoned. The Scholastic solution broadly speaking was to give a whole-hearted adherence to both, with the proviso that in the last resort the deliverances of the unassisted human reason, i.e. Aristotle, must be modified, even in this or that particular provisionally abandoned, in the case of a seemingly hopeless divergence from the deliverances of Divine Revelation, i.e. the accepted teaching of the Church.

At this point the study of Scholasticism by most modern philosophers comes to an abrupt if premature close. The chaste spirit of pure monism is aghast at the spectacle of a dualism so naked and unashamed. The philosopher as such is, of course, justified in guiding his studies and reflections by some such simple axioms as " All that is not monism is wrong," or " all dualism is necessarily self-contradictory," so long as he finds such axioms stimulating and illuminative. For the theologian, the modern theologian at least, the situation is more complicated. For he, too, is in possession of

a double corpus of knowledge. He, too, is at once the professed guardian of a divine revelation and the devoted student and adherent of newly discovered truth. Despite the vast changes in environment and in presentation the problem is essentially the same, for the problem which by the more or less fortuitous discovery of the Aristotelian corpus was rendered explicit in the Scholastic synthesis, is the problem which was implicit from the first, and is in fact inherent in the very conception of a specific revelation of God in history. It is altogether beside the point to dismiss Scholasticism from serious consideration with a few superficial remarks about dualism. It is altogether beside the point to assert that the Aristotelian philosophy is obsolete and false; the question of the precise truth or falsity of the underlying principles of Aristotelianism is a proper subject for prolonged investigation, for which the primary requisite is a first-hand acquaintance with the original works of Aristotle. The mere dislike for or even the reasoned objection to Aristotelianism provides no adequate ground for the *a priori* rejection of Scholasticism as obsolete and meaningless and negligible. The point is that for the Scholastics Aristotle was both new and true, the last word of purely human wisdom. The respect of Aquinas for Aristotle is comparable with the respect of the modern theologian for Bergson or Darwin or Hegel, and it would be difficult to put it higher. In all the range of purely human affairs Aquinas accepts the dictums of Aristotle with all that awe-struck reverence for scientific and philosophic authority with which we are still so familiar in theological circles.

It is scarcely in this respect that the modern theologian can have any quarrel with the spirit and method of the Scholastics. But when the deliverances of Aristotle appeared to Aquinas to contravene the accepted dogmas of the Christian faith, incredible as such a course may seem to the modern monistically trained mind, Aquinas did not proceed to alter the Christian dogma, he altered Aristotle. It is well to put the matter quite crudely. He could do so without dishonesty because he really did believe beyond a peradventure that the corpus of Christian theology embodied the specific personal revelation of God in history in the person of Jesus Christ. He was a dualist in epistemology : he, like the Scholastics in general, believed that there was a twofold fount of knowledge open to the Christian man. He had a profound reverence for both, but when he found that what he believed to be the latest deliverances of science conflicted with what he believed to be the authentic revelation of God, he did not proceed to subject the truths of revelation to the methods of science and so resolve the antinomy as he would have been logically compelled to do if he had believed that the pursuit of scientific and philosophic argument was the sole avenue to truth. He adopted the opposite course. While asserting the ultimate unity of truth he appealed not to a theology but to a science better informed. To many modern theologians this appears to be singularly perverse. But that is only an indication of the distance we have travelled since.

However that may be, it will be retorted, the dualism of the Scholastic synthesis is intolerable to

the modern mind trained in the application of the scientific and historic method. Let the dualism of Aquinas and his like be granted : no one is concerned to deny it. The real crux is the assertion that dualism as such is essential for an adequate presentation of the Christian faith. On the contrary, it is essential for the adequate presentation or representation of the Christian faith to-day that dualism as such should be eliminated. We must get behind not only the crude and explicit dualism of the Scholastics but also the more refined and implicit dualism of their predecessors. The vicious strain must be traced to its source, and ruthlessly destroyed.

This has been the programme of modern philosophy in general and of modern philosophy of religion more particularly, in spirit and in effect since the time of Descartes, openly and avowedly since the time of Kant. The philosophy of religion may be said to be in our time approaching completion. The elimination of God some time ago now quite appreciably simplified the problem. The approaching and consequent elimination of man may be confidently expected to finally solve it. At least with no God to save and no man to need salvation the problem will assume manageable proportions. This is not on the face of it very promising material for a philosophy of Divine Incarnation, yet the method which leads to these somewhat startling if profound conclusions and the philosophy which they embody are eagerly embraced and laboriously applied to the exposition of the Christian faith by perhaps nine-tenths of the professed theologians in the modern world. Most of those it is true who still

retain the name of Christian grow faint by the way and consciously or unconsciously abandon monism before it is altogether too late. Some shadowy adumbration of the traditional Christian faith fitfully glimmers amid the encircling gloom. A dualism of their own is introduced to avert the full consequences which follow from the premisses on which they build, and the method which they pursue. But if this be so why adopt at the outset a type of philosophy which inevitably begs the whole question in regard to traditional Christianity? Why distrust or condemn the Scholastics because their dualism is open and avowed. Is it to be supposed for a single moment that the pure and sincere monist will either overlook or condone the presence of the unwelcome stranger merely because it is "a little one"?

The dualism of reason and revelation is an idiosyncrasy and a difficulty: but it is an idiosyncrasy and a difficulty which is not peculiar to the Scholastic philosophy. It is peculiar to Christianity in anything like its traditional form, and the Scholastics brought the pecularity to full expression and faced the difficulty with transparent honesty. Consider very briefly the sort of results that follow from the conscious abandonment of the Scholastic position and the thoroughgoing application of a monistic view of the universe with its corollary the historic method to the evolution of Christian theology. We go behind the Scholastics because of their naïve dualism. Behind the Scholastics stands Augustine, Augustine the propagandist of supernatural grace. This will never do; so we pass from the West to the East, from Africa, say, to Chalcedon. But the Chalcedonian formula is in the view of

the thoroughgoing monistic theologian more responsible for the apostasy of the modern world than Voltaire and Rousseau combined. It is soaked in dualism. It will never do. So we pass behind the Chalcedonian formula to Athanasius and the ὁμοουσιος. Well, ὁμοουσιος is on the face of it not at all a proper kind of word for a monist to use. We turn to the New Testament, and there is Paul. Now Paul no doubt honestly believed that he was all things to all men, but it is certain that he is nothing but a nuisance to a thoroughgoing monist. So we turn to the Master and we read in the very heart of the Synoptic tradition, that Jesus said, no man knoweth the Father but the Son and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, the same fatal dualism on the very lips of the Lord Himself. Very well, then, He never said it at all, or He only said something which was really very different but sounded rather like it. Or, if He did really say it He was either an impudent charlatan or a dangerous maniac or a harmless lunatic. Granted that the Scholastics were sometimes crude and naïve and credulous it is fairly clear at least that they possessed no monopoly.

It is to be noted that everyone of the positions traversed in this historical *tour de force* was adopted and generally adopted consciously to safeguard the very claim which Jesus is represented to have made for Himself. The intransigence of Paul, the ὁμοουσιος, the formula of Chalcedon, the supernatural grace of Augustine, the *revelatio dei* of Aquinas and the Scholastics were each in turn directed to conserve the essential claim of traditional Christianity that Jesus Himself is the personal intervention, the unique

revelation of God in History. The fundamental distinction between revelation and reason so characteristic of Scholasticism is the term and culmination of a long antecedent process. It is in no sense new. It is implicit and inherent in the claims which Jesus is reported to have made for Himself. When Aquinas argued that if there has been a unique revelation by God in the course of human history it cannot be proved or demonstrated either in regard to its nature or content by the use of the natural reason, he was not putting forward arrogant claims on behalf of a priesthood thirsting for lordship over the spirits of men. He was merely stating a demonstrable truth, a truth which the course of modern theology may be surely said to have clearly demonstrated. Neither by inductive nor by deductive process of argument can the occurrence of a unique event be demonstrated. Unless we are willing to concede the antecedent possibility of such a thing no knowledge or observation of mankind can render it credible that never man spake as this man spake. Such an assertion is always open to the retort "But we know that men never do speak as you say this man spake." Aquinas is only anticipating the contention of Hume that no amount of argument or available testimony can serve to demonstrate logically the occurrence of a miracle. But Aquinas unlike Hume none the less believed that miracles did happen, and that the Christian revelation was the greatest of all miracles, and that they and it were to be spiritually apprehended by a faith, which is itself the gift of God. Not only in the view of Aquinas is a purely intellectual knowledge and apprehension

of specifically Christian truth inherently impossible, it would be practically useless, for it would leave the will and the conscience untouched. "The devils also believe and tremble." These positions were, of course, among the commonplaces of an older theology.

The Historical Method is a good enough servant to theology. It is a very bad master. If it is not strictly limited and controlled by faith in a superior source of knowledge in a manner altogether comparable with that by which the rationalism of Aristotle was rendered by Aquinas subservient to what he held to be the truths of revelation, there is an end to any claim on the part of theology to be the guardian and exponent of a unique and final revelation. The Historical Method has done its legitimate work when it acknowledges as its most competent and sincere exponents do acknowledge that the Jesus of History is an enigma. But the fact that the claims of Jesus are to the natural man enigmatical is not in the first instance a discovery of science, it is a part of the Gospel story. The Historical Method depends wholly upon the hypothesis that the course of history is uniform, that events are always the natural outcome of antecedent events in a purely natural order. If any break in the sequence of natural events has in fact occurred it is clearly beyond the competence of the Historical Method even to recognize its occurrence. To recognize the occurrence is *ipso facto* to abandon the method. It is not a question of the amount or of the quality of the evidence. It is a question of the nature of the facts to which the evidence purports to bear witness. Virgin birth and physical resurrection do not occur in

ordinary human experience nor are they consonant with the known nature of man. Therefore any belief or statement that such events have actually occurred must be mistaken. The test of truth is verisimilitude. It is a perfectly legitimate and a very valuable method as applied to the ordinary course of secular history. But in regard to the possibility of a truth which transcends verisimilitude, and the possible occurrence of events which are out of the course of ordinary human experience, it begs the whole question at the outset. It is not that the evidence is weighed and deliberately rejected, it is never admitted. What is really in dispute is not the nature of evidence, but the nature of God.

The fact is that for most scientific historians and for many modern theologians the Historical Method is not merely testing of a hypothesis, justified as any other scientific hypothesis by the success of its works ; it is the ruthless application of a dogma which must be made to work at all costs. Now the sole justification for raising the presupposition as to the uniformity of experience which is the working postulate of the Historical Method from the status of a tentative hypothesis to the status of a fundamental dogma is the conviction not only that all experience is ultimately reducible to the experience of the trained scientific intellect but that all reality, all being, all activity, God, to use the theological language, is exhaustively expressed or achieving exhaustive expression in the historical process conceived as a concatenation of purely natural events. The justification of the monistic epistemology rests upon a monistic ontology which it presupposes and explicates. For the traditional

Christian conception of a specific revelation in history which asserts a distinction in kind and origin between the ordinary events of history and the events of a specific revelation, there is substituted the conception that history as such is the one and only revelation of God and that the difference between one portion of history and another in regard to its moral or religious value is not a difference in origin and in kind but solely a difference in degree. All being is exhausted and expressed or capable of exhaustive expression in becoming: God does not possess a being wholly distinct from and independent of the processes of nature and of history which He originates and sustains. It is of the nature of God to pour Himself forth, to express Himself, in and through the evolutionary processes of nature and history. The reason why God does not intervene within the process in some distinctive mode as in the traditional scheme is that there is nothing distinctive left over to express. The evolutionary process *is* the revelation of God, the revelation not of His Will, but of His ultimate nature, not by way of creation *ex nihilo*, but by way of an inner constraint to creative self-expression. Knowledge of the evolutionary process is therefore knowledge of the nature of God, a completely adequate knowledge of the evolutionary process would be a complete revelation of God. There can be no other kind of knowledge or revelation because there is nothing else to reveal and nothing else to know. There is only one kind of being which constitutes the universe, the kind of being that is whose essential nature it is to express itself in evolutionary becoming.

Now the Scholastic ontology or theory of being is as thoroughgoing in its dualism as the Scholastic epistemology or theory of knowledge ; and it is based upon the explicit denial at the very outset that the being which may be predicated of everything in the Universe from God to atom is fundamentally of one kind. On the contrary there are many kinds of being, substantial being and accidental being, actual being and potential being, real being and logical being and so on, and in the Scholastic view any right understanding of the nature of the Universe depends upon a clear recognition of these distinctions. But far outweighing all other distinctions in its significance and importance is the fundamental distinction between uncreated and created being, between God and His creatures. Being is not predicated of God and creation *aequivoce*, i.e. identically in the same sense but by analogy only.

God is the perfection of being : the perfectly self-possessed being of perfect goodness and beauty and truth and power and wisdom and love. In perfect being, in God, nature and existence which in all other being are distinguishable are necessarily one : it is the nature of perfection to exist. Nor can perfection change and grow : there is no potentiality in God ; He is *actus purus*, "pure actuality." He is all that He is always and in all respects. It was a tenet of Scholasticism that the existence of perfect being could be demonstrated by the natural employment of the human reason adequately trained and honestly applied. The imperfect being with which we have alone direct acquaintance, so they argued, can be shown to demand

the existence of perfect being as its source and support. Potential being, the process of becoming, and all created being is potential, requires and demands the existence of being which is pure actuality in which there is no shadow of change. The dualism once again is open and avowed: but in this case the dualism is to be found not only in the Christian sources of Scholasticism with their insistence upon the ultimate transcendence of God so characteristic of the fathers of the Church, of the New Testament and the Old Testament: the dualism in this case is there beyond a peradventure in pagan sources, in Plato and in Aristotle himself. The natural reason of man and the divine revelation concur in asserting the existence of this perfect being. Revelation is superior in two respects. It is available for all. It does not demand the use of trained philosophic intellect, with all its liability to error, and it passes far beyond any knowledge which is accessible to the natural reason. We could never have known by the use of the intellect alone the essential Trinitarian nature of God, the Incarnation of the Divine Son and the atonement for human sin wrought thereby. Thus the dualism in ontology corresponds with the dualism in epistemology.

The proofs of the existence of perfect being so conceived which are propounded by Scholasticism are both highly technical, and highly disputable. More particularly since the time of Kant they have been very generally held to be invalid, to which it may be sufficient to reply that on the Kantian theory of knowledge they certainly are, but not necessarily so on a different theory of knowledge, and not at all so on

the Scholastic and Aristotelian theory of knowledge. The ultimate test of a philosophy is in its general success in depicting a *Weltanschauung* which is both credible in itself and conservative of the deepest interests and aspirations of mankind. No philosophy yet propounded is logically water-tight. Nor is there any reason why it should be save the preposterous demand that the human reason as now constituted is competent to measure all existence.

In any case on grounds of reason and of revelation alike the Scholastics were convinced of the existence of perfect being, for ever distinct and for ever distinguishable from all other being existent or conceivable. It is their root conviction, the central conviction as they believed of pagan philosophy and of Christian theology. On this distinction between perfect and imperfect being rested the doctrine of creation and the possibility of a real and effective and specific revelation not identical with the creative process but within it. For if the Creator possesses in Himself the perfection of all being, if His nature is the nature of all perfection necessarily existing, there is no inner compulsion to create; creation is an act of the divine will *ad extra*, it is not a necessary self-expression of the divine nature. Creation so far from exhausting the essentially divine activity, makes no demand upon the essential activity at all. The perfect self-expression of God is attained and enjoyed through the inner activities of the triune being, in the relation of Father, Son and Spirit. It is perfect and it turns ever in its perfection back to its source. God is not comparable to some lonely Titan existing in splendid isolation. He possesses in and by

Himself the infinite and eternal riches of an infinite and eternal activity. Creation is not necessarily eternal and even if it were eternal it is not necessary. It is a gratuitous act of divine love by which in His infinite wisdom He chose to give a wholly dependent and subsidiary existence to beings other than Himself. The relation between God and His creatures is a wholly one-sided relation, in that while the creation depends absolutely upon God, God in no sense depends upon His creation. God would be neither more nor less perfect if the creation dissolved into utter nothingness. The absolute perfection of perfect being would still exist. This is the Christian and Scholastic doctrine of creation. It is dualistic, it is miraculous, it presents great difficulty to the human reason, and still more to human conceit, for though the modern man gets on very well without God and can even make it his boast, he finds the conception of a God who can get on very well without him highly offensive. None the less the Christian doctrine of Creation is vital to the Christian faith, and to the conservation of any adequate belief in either Revelation or Incarnation. It is well to recognize that there is not and there cannot be any real analogy to creation. It is a wholly unique event or process. It is best to recognize frankly that it is a highly technical conception of Christian theology whose value is that it safeguards certain distinctive features of the Christian revelation.

For if the process of nature and the course of history is a product of the divine will which leaves the divine nature and the divine activity in essence unimpaired, any sort of identification or confusion between

God on the one hand and nature or history on the other is an absurdity. God can with sovereign freedom reveal Himself in the course of history because the course of history is a closed series of events so long only as God wills it to be so. God cannot become incarnate in history if history, in the sense of natural process, is the sole possible expression of the divine activity. In that view History itself is the gradual or progressive Incarnation of God and there is nothing left to be incarnated in a specific Incarnation within the process. Incarnation is no longer the all but incredible condescension of infinite love and infinite pity to sinful and despairing man. On the contrary it is altogether the kind of thing one has every reason to expect.

The dualism in anthropology, that of nature and grace, is theoretically a corollary of the dualisms in ontology and in epistemology, and practically the central thesis of the Scholastic philosophy of the Christian religion. The thesis is that the soul of the individual man is athirst for the living God, yet cannot know God in any saving sense except by the direct action of God Himself. The beatific vision is the sole ultimate end of all specifically human activity, and this vision the final fruition of all desire, emotional and intellectual, is the crowning gift of God to the individual Christian soul in the life beyond, *in patria*. The finest passages in Aquinas are perhaps those in which—with a restrained passion free from all direct emotional appeal—he seeks to demonstrate logically and in strict accordance with his whole dogmatic system what is in effect the classical phrase of Augustine, "Our souls were made for Thee, and they can find no rest until they come to

rest in Thee." But here, too, as in the ontology, the dualism has its roots in the pagan sources ; it is not merely the reiteration of Paulinism. Christianity is presented as the direct and final solution of the pagan quest.

It is the great pagan philosophers Plato and Aristotle who maintain, each in his own way, that man has a distinctively human life and activity different in kind from that of the beasts. By each of them the specifically human activity comes to be regarded as a form of intellectual contemplation. In the final and neo-Platonic phase of the pagan philosophy intellectual contemplation is seen to involve the demand for ultimate communion. At this crisis Augustine in a supreme spiritual experience fused Platonism and Paulinism, identified as the ground of his own spiritual being the Ultimate Being of the Platonic Aristotelian tradition with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He thereby set the theological problem which receives in Mediæval Scholasticism the most adequate solution which has been attained hitherto. The task of modern theology is to find if it can a more adequate solution of this problem : but most modern theologians, having abandoned for any serious purpose Plato and Aristotle, and Augustine and Paul, not unnaturally find Heraclitus and "the historic Jesus" inadequate substitutes. In these circumstances, in despair of a solution, they often appear to be devoting their chief energies to evading the problem.

V

DOGMA IN PROTESTANT SCHOLASTICISM

By R. S. Franks, M.A., D.Litt.

V

DOGMA IN PROTESTANT SCHOLASTICISM

I

THE subject next to be considered in the course of these studies of dogma is one, which with the progress of time has become obscure. The material for a survey lies buried in the great folios and solid quartos of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, which fill the appropriate shelves of theological libraries, but as a rule only to be undisturbed and gather dust. Time has made these great works in the main a matter for the historical specialist only. The presuppositions upon which they were framed no longer hold good. The needs they were meant to serve have passed away, or have so changed as to become unrecognizable. Looking at these monuments of bygone piety and out-of-date learning, one is constrained to say, as so often in regarding the past, " Where are the snows of yesteryear ? " The churches that brought them forth, the universities where their authors reigned triumphant, are given over to new ideas altogether beyond the imagination of the Protestant orthodoxy, of which they are at once the memorial and the tomb.

The Protestant Scholasticism belongs to Germany, Holland and Switzerland. It is divided into two kinds, the Lutheran and the Reformed, in correspondence with the two great confessions of Protestantism. It furnishes a Protestant parallel to the mediæval Scholasticism of the Roman Catholic Church, with which it is equal in learning, in acumen, and in completeness, if not in originality and boldness of speculation. The schoolmen of the Middle Ages had before them the task of systematizing the Greek dogma, the Augustinian theology and the living institutions of the Church within the framework of a philosophical view of the world. They attempted their task originally in the eleventh and twelfth centuries with the help of the Platonic principles inherent in the dogma and in the theology of Augustine themselves, but finally completed it in the thirteenth century upon the basis of the Aristotelian philosophy, which they studied and mastered with immense zeal and thoroughness.

The Protestant schoolmen of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were faced with an entirely similar problem. They, too, accepted the Greek dogma and the theology of Augustine, but substituted for the institutions of mediæval Catholicism and the theory of them that had been worked out by the Catholic schoolmen the new evangel of the Reformation and the Church institutions which had grown up out of it. These they finally combined with the philosophical world-view which the mediæval schoolmen had worked out, so that in the end they produced systems upon the same scale and as nobly planned and executed

as those of their Catholic predecessors. But it must be admitted that in their main characteristics as systems, in the ordering of the material, in the logical method of a double reference to authority and reason, and finally in the general philosophical substructure which they adopt, the Protestant systems are secondary and depend upon the work of the mediæval schoolmen. Only so far as they incorporate into the same general framework the new practical doctrines of the Reformation with the accompanying altered view of Bible, Church and Sacraments, are the great Protestant schoolmen innovators upon the men of the thirteenth century.

Or, perhaps this statement is not quite adequate or quite fair to them, in that though it mentions a change of view as to the Bible, it does not sufficiently indicate the really great improvement of their Biblical scholarship upon that of the Middle Ages. This was due, in the first place, to the abandonment of the allegorical method of exegesis and the use of the grammatical and historical methods of the Renaissance, and secondly, to the much more thorough and detailed study of the Bible as the authoritative basis of doctrine, which arose from the fact that the Reformers in support of their new views had maintained that the Bible, and the Bible alone, was the true foundation of Christian doctrine. Nevertheless, when all these admissions have been made, the Protestant Scholasticism remains a secondary phenomenon, important certainly as an adaptation of old principles to fresh uses, but not comparable with the Scholasticism of the Middle Ages as a manifestation of Christian

audacity in claiming the whole world for Christ and His Church.

There can be no doubt, however, as to its utility to the Protestant Churches of the Continent. It enabled them completely to understand their own position in relation to that of the Roman Catholic Church and to the existing general knowledge of the world, so long as that was taken from Aristotle. It was a work of Protestant self-knowledge, of the first importance to the champions of the new orthodoxy, when they had to speak with their enemies in the gate. It formed the necessary basis for religious teaching, alike for sermons and for catechetical instruction. So far as what it set out to do could be accomplished within the terms of its presuppositions, it did it well. It only lost its grip on men and perished when these presuppositions themselves gave way.

II

We may analyse the Protestant Scholasticism in accordance with what has been said into three elements. The first is the general philosophical framework, including the doctrines of God and the world. The second is the restatement of the Trinitarian and Christological dogma and of the Augustinian anthropology. The third is the new theology of the Reformation.

Of these incomparably the most important element for us at the present day is the last, that is, the careful analysis and discussion of the Protestant doctrines of grace and faith, of justification and good works, and

of the Church and the Sacraments, with their presuppositions in a new doctrine of the Atonement and a new doctrine of Holy Scripture. It is only in developing these presuppositions that the theologians of the seventeenth century have really transcended what they inherited from the Reformers. Nevertheless they have very carefully analysed and restated the doctrines which compose the new gospel of the Reformation. Their doctrine of saving faith, with all that is included in it, is the centre of their whole organism, and it still remains valuable to one who wants fully to understand the Protestant point of view.

A. *The philosophical groundwork.* The philosophical element in the new Scholasticism, viz. the doctrines of God and the world, was practically taken over bodily from mediævalism, and in reality presents no new growth when compared with its predecessor. The bold speculative outlook of the Middle Ages is lost. There is no longer the same independent interest in the philosophical problems of epistemology and metaphysics in their religious application. We have instead merely a statement of what may be called in modern phrase " the approved results " of the earlier scholastic investigations, and of these alone. All is calm and cautious and dull, as compared with the vigour and freedom of the Middle Ages. It is certainly not in this region that the Protestant schoolmen have won any laurels.

B. *Trinitarianism, Anthropology and Christology.* The Trinitarianism of the Protestant doctors has nothing new in it, and their Augustinianism does but in the main repeat the same variety of interpretation

and emphasis as we find in the Middle Ages. Except that in general there is a more sombre view of the corruption brought about by original sin than is to be found in the mediæval schools, we simply have a revival between Lutheran and Reformed of the old controversies about the priority of the Divine predestination or the human freewill.

It is only in the Christology that new ideas are adopted which had been worked out by the Lutheranism of the later sixteenth century, about a kenosis of the God-man in His Incarnation—ideas which, however, were only to bear fruit in the freer atmosphere of the nineteenth century.

To maintain the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper Luther had taken over from his chief theological authority, William of Occam, the theory of consubstantiation tentatively proposed by the latter as a more rational alternative for the authoritatively approved doctrine of transubstantiation. The doctrine of consubstantiation was accepted by the Lutheran Church and its consequences were drawn out. One of these was the ubiquity of Christ's humanity. The same Christ could be present in His humanity on many altars at the same time.

The Lutherans of the sixteenth century explained this ubiquity from the *communicatio idiomatum*, or mutual interchange of attributes between the Divine and human natures of Christ in the Incarnation. Thus Lutheranism accepted a deification of the humanity in the Incarnate Christ, and in order to meet with the facts of His earthly existence developed the theory of a kenosis or self-emptying, by which the

God-man withheld the Divine attributes of His humanity, such as ubiquity, from exercise during His life on earth. This was in itself a piece of bold, not to say audacious speculation, but it became part of the new Lutheran dogma, and was as such received by the Lutheran Scholasticism. The Reformed theologians, rejecting from the first the doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ's humanity, and maintaining only a spiritual presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, had no place in their systems for such kenotic doctrines.

C. *The new theology of the Reformation.* In systematizing and working out the practical doctrines of the Reformation, the seventeenth-century Scholasticism has not only preserved faithfully the central affirmations of the Reformers as to grace, faith, justification, and the Church as the body of the faithful, whose marks are the pure word of God and the right administration of the Sacraments; as has already been observed, it has also developed at least two doctrines implied in the Reformation evangel in an important way—the doctrines of Scripture and of the Atonement.

(i) *The Gospel, the Church and the Sacraments.* To enumerate first the principal points of the gospel as presented by the Protestant theologians: grace is the free favour of God shown to the sinner, corresponding to which, faith, though it implies the acceptance of the gospel message as true, is essentially *fiducia*, the trust that is the proper response to and acceptance of God's grace. Justification is the gracious sentence of God, by which He pardons the sinner and accepts him as righteous, for no merits of his own, but solely because of his trust in the Divine grace, as manifested

in the gospel. All this is common property of the Protestant schoolmen. In agreement with it, they state their doctrine of the Church and its ministry, the one the body of the faithful, the other the order of men raised up by God to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments.

The general view of the latter, which are held to be two in number, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, is evangelical. They are signs and seals of the Divine grace, but are subordinate to and confirmatory of the gospel. A special presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper is, however, maintained: the controversy as to its nature, whether consubstantial or purely spiritual, goes on between the two branches of Continental Protestantism, much as it originated between their founders. The Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation has been already noted as an erratic block introduced into the Reformation theory from the quarry of mediæval theology. Not here is to be found the important development of Reformation principles, which we have ascribed to the Protestant schoolmen, but rather in the two great doctrines of Holy Scripture and the Atonement.

(ii) *The doctrine of Holy Scripture.* The Protestant doctors were compelled by the antithesis of Roman Catholicism to formulate the doctrine of Holy Scripture with great care and fulness. It is one of the most original parts of their work.

In the ancient Church and in the Middle Ages the relations and mutual dependence of Scripture and Church tradition had never been completely worked out. Irenæus, certainly, had established as the three

norms of Christian doctrine, the Creed, the New Testament Scriptures, and the apostolical tradition. But in the Greek Church, it was not unorthodox to appeal to Scripture alone, though in practice tradition was always venerated.

In the Middle Ages things were much on the same footing. Thomas Aquinas says :

" Sacred doctrine uses authorities drawn from canonic Scripture, whence to argue with absolute cogency. The authority of other doctors of the Church, however, it uses as a natural basis for argument with probability."[1]

Duns Scotus similarly says :

" Holy Scripture sufficiently contains the doctrine necessary for the pilgrim soul."[2]

Occam taught more emphatically still :

" A Christian is not compelled as a necessity of salvation to believe, either as a duty or in practice, what is neither contained in the Bible, nor can be inferred as a necessary and clear consequence from the mere contents of the Bible."[3]

Yet, on the other hand, Duns Scotus emphasizes the compilation of the Canon by the Church, without which the New Testament could not have originated. The authority of Scripture is thus made to depend in the last resort upon the approval and authorization of the Church.[4] The Occamist Biel goes even farther, and says :

" A truth is to be called Catholic, either because it

[1] *Summa Theologica*, I, 1, 8.
[2] *Op Oxon., Prol.*, qu. 2.
[3] Kropatscheck, *Das Schriftprinzip der lutherischen Kirche*, p. 440, n. 2.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 442, n. 1.

is revealed of God, or contained in the Divine Scripture, or because it is received by the Church, or because it is approved by the supreme Pontiff, or because it follows from one of the above-mentioned by necessary consequence."[1]

Into the midst of this ambiguity broke the sharply formulated utterance of Luther, supporting his gospel without hestitation upon Scripture alone :

" The articles of faith are not to be built up from the words or the deeds of the Fathers. . . . We, on the other hand, have another rule, namely, that the Word of God should establish the articles of faith, and none other, not even an angel."[2]

The Roman Church in defence of Catholicism was not slow to emphasize the point already made by Duns Scotus that the authority of Scripture necessarily depended on that of the Church that canonized it, and that in consequence it was reasonable that the Church that canonized should also interpret. To maintain Luther's appeal to the Scriptures alone was of the utmost importance to the Protestant schoolmen. If they admitted tradition, the edge of the doctrine of justification as Luther and Paul taught it was instantly blunted by the Augustinian gloss, " *Quid aliud est justificati quam justi facti.*"[3] Similarly the peculiar Protestant view of grace, faith, works and merit could only be supported from Scripture unhampered by tradition. The same was true of the Protestant doctrines of Church, ministry and sacraments.

[1] *Collectorium*, III, 25, 3, dub. 3.
[2] *Schmalkald Articles*, II, 2, 15.
[3] *De sp. et litt.*, 25, 45.

Everything, therefore, depended upon the cardinal doctrine of Holy Scripture, on which accordingly the Protestant theologians lavished infinite care. They taught after Calvin the self-evidence of Scripture, as inspired of the Holy Ghost, to the believer indwelt by the same Spirit. This was the famous doctrine of the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti*, by which it was sought to turn the flank of the Roman polemic.

The foundation of the Protestant Scholastic doctrine of Scripture is the doctrine of its Divine origin and inspiration. "Holy Scripture," says the great Lutheran doctor, John Gerhard, "is the Word of God set forth in the Holy Scriptures."[1] In other words, there is no real distinction between Scripture and the Word of God, which is its whole content, so that it contains nothing else. Since Holy Scripture is God's word, it is distinguished from all other books in having a meaning and content that is entirely Divine. The ground of this is that God by His Holy Spirit inspired its writers. God Himself is the author of Scripture; prophets and apostles are only His instruments. God supernaturally communicated to their minds not only the thoughts, but also the very words contained in Scripture. Inspiration is thus not only real, but also verbal. The Scripture down to its very last jot and tittle is Divine.

Upon this general basis the Protestant doctors drew out the characteristics, or as they called them, the *affectiones* of Holy Scripture. These are its authority, perspicuity, sufficiency and efficacy.

[1] See for this and the following points of Gerhard's doctrine Schmid, *Die Dogmatik der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche dargestellt und aus den Quellen belegt*, 5th ed., pp. 20 ff.

(1) *Authority.* Since the Scripture is really God's word, it follows that it must command our absolute faith and obedience. It is in discussing the authority of Holy Scripture, that the Protestant schoolmen appeal not only to its own claims, but also still more to the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers. On the one hand, they quote the proof text, 2 Timothy III. 16, to show that every Scripture is inspired of God, and the whole of Scripture is so inspired. On the other hand, Gerhard says :

"Men who are within the bounds of the Church, do not inquire concerning the authority of Scripture : it is their first principle. How can they be disciples of Christ, if they will bring the doctrine of Christ into question ? How can they be true members of the Church, if they will doubt concerning the foundations of the Church ? How can they ask to have that proved, which they always assume to prove everything else ? How can they doubt of that, whose efficacy they feel in their hearts ? The Holy Spirit testifies in their Hearts that the Spirit is truth, that is, that the doctrine proceeding from the Spirit is unshaken truth."[1]

(2) The *sufficiency* or *perfection* of Scripture means its independence of all Church tradition. Since it is the very word of God, nothing may be added to it, or taken away from it. "We must pass by tradition," says Gerhard, "and cleave to Holy Scripture alone."[2]

(3) The *perspicuity* of Scripture signifies that it

[1] Schmid, op. cit., p. 34
[2] *Ibid.*

needs no Church to interpret it, but that the believer understands its meaning by the same Spirit by which it was written. Obscurities were indeed admitted to exist in Scripture, but not so as to prevent all that was required for life and salvation being plainly evident to the believer. What is difficult in one place, is explained in another. Scripture is its own interpreter.

(4) Finally, Scripture is living and *efficacious*. It is the means of illumination, conversion and salvation, formed and animated by the power of God Himself.

To give some idea of the fulness with which the doctrine of Holy Scripture was developed, it may be added that Gerhard, after composing for his system an article on Holy Scripture to the length of fifty folio pages, was dissatisfied with this treatment, and added an "Exegesis sive uberior explicatio" on the same theme running to over two hundred similar pages.

(iii) *The Atonement.* It is time to turn to the other great achievement of the Protestant schoolmen, their doctrine of the Atonement. What they did here was to transform the mediæval doctrine of the satisfaction and merit of Christ, in such a way that it could become the basis of the new understanding of justification by faith. It is noteworthy, that while later doctors, such as the Lutheran Quenstedt and the Reformed Heidegger, treat the Atonement in conjunction with the doctrine of the Incarnation as the chapter "De officio Christi," Gerhard at the beginning of the series of great Lutheran schoolmen shows the intimate and vital connection of the new theory of the Atonement

with the Protestant doctrine of justification, by treating it simply as a part of the *locus de justificatione.*

The Protestant theory of the work of Christ included the doctrine of His threefold office and His twofold obedience. It is a mistake to limit the Protestant doctrine of the Atonement, as is too often done, to the great theory of Christ's satisfaction and merit, which is undoubtedly its centre and chief peculiarity. This element of the Protestant doctrine, taken by itself, is commonly spoken of as the forensic theory of the Atonement; but it is only a part of the whole Protestant view of Christ's work. It belongs to the Priestly office, alongside of which the Kingly and the Prophetic offices have to be considered, if we want to see how the Protestant doctors thought of Christ's atoning work as a whole, and how they made it the basis of their gospel of justification by faith.

This whole doctrine is stated in epitome by Gerhard, as follows:

"The office of Christ is threefold—prophetic, priestly and kingly. The prophetic office is that by which Christ revealed to us the will of God concerning our salvation, which He executes, first, by Himself publishing the gospel, and next, by establishing the ministry of teaching in the Church, with which also is to be taken the institution of the sacraments.

The priestly office of Christ is that by which, interposing Himself between man and God, He reconciled the whole human race to God, making satisfaction to the Divine law, and interceding with God; wherefore the parts of the priestly office are two, satisfaction and intercession. Satisfaction is that by which He paid to

God a price sufficient for the sins of the whole human race, and obtained for it righteousness and eternal life. This satisfaction is to be seen, first, in the fulfilment of the Divine law, and secondly, in the payment of the penalties of sin. It is commonly spoken of as Christ's active and passive obedience, each of which is a part of His Priestly office.

The Kingly office of Christ is that by which He governs all things in heaven and earth, and above all, His Church."[1]

Such is the whole scheme of the Protestant theory of Christ's saving work. The doctrine of the threefold office comes from Calvin. There is a hint of it in Eusebius, some suggestion of it in St. Thomas Aquinas; but essentially it is a new creation of Calvin's own, and it is important because it affords a framework, in which the effects of Christ's satisfaction and intercession become available for men. As Priest He obtained from God grace and favour for men, as Prophet He offers His grace, and as King He bestows it on the believer. We must never forget the Prophetic and Kingly offices of Christ, when considering how His satisfaction and merit were conceived by the Protestant doctors as becoming the foundation of a gospel, and as being made practically effective in the salvation of men.

Still there is no doubt that to the Protestant Scholasticism the central and fundamental thing in the doctrine of Christ's saving work was His Priestly office, and above all His satisfaction and merit, as contained in

[1] R. S. Franks, *A History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ*, Vol. II, p. 3.

His twofold obedience active and passive, by which He endured for us the penalties of sin, and also fulfilled the law in our stead. Space does not permit an exhibition of all the elaborate and meticulous care with which the points of this doctrine were worked out by the Protestant theologians; nor does it allow a demonstration of how exactly and precisely they defined Christ's satisfaction and merit, and how absolutely proof against every possible misunderstanding or objection they strove to make their theory.

What is to be said as to the origin of this great doctrine? In spite of the attractive exegesis of Romans III. 24–26, which has recently been put forward by Dr. Anderson Scott in his book *Christianity according to St. Paul*,[1] it seems most probable that the real starting-point of the forensic theory of Christ's satisfaction is to be found in St. Paul's epistles. This view is supported by so outstanding a modern authority as Lietzmann in his Commentary on Romans.[2]

Still, any attempt to work out a complete theory of the Atonement on forensic lines was long in coming about. There are exegetical and homiletical passages pointing in this direction in some of the Greek Fathers, a passage or two in Ambrose and Hilary, some suggestions in the mediæval schoolmen. But with the Reformation and its return to Paul's doctrine of justification as the centre of the Christian gospel, the conditions were prepared for the development of a consistently forensic theory of the Atonement.

[1] pp 59 ff.

[2] *Handbuch zum neuen Testament*, Vol. III, pp. 46 ff.

There was an attempt to weld the rudimentary and very incomplete thoughts of St. Paul on the subject into a coherent system, and the result was the great doctrine, which, even if to-day we are only too conscious of its shortcoming and difficulties, still deserves respect as a monument of theological construction, that once served as the very focus of Christian piety and devotion. What the Crucifix is to the Roman Catholic, that the forensic doctrine of the Atonement was to the orthodox Protestant.

The foundations of the doctrine were laid by Luther and Melanchthon. The Lutherans of the later sixteenth century then developed it further into the form of the double obedience of Christ. Then, finally, it was the Scholasticism of the seventeenth century with its genius for systematization, which set it in the framework of Calvin's doctrine of the threefold office, supported by which it could be used in a truly evangelical way, and could, as has been said, inspire the warmest and purest devotion. It is in the hymns of Paul Gerhard that the seventeenth century expressed once and for all that depth of feeling which was associated with the doctrines of orthodox Protestantism. The very heart of the Protestant Church speaks in the famous hymn, "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden." When we criticize the forensic theology of Protestantism, as we are bound to do at the present day, we should never forget how it has moved the human heart, nor fail to see what it could be on its best side.

III

If now, at the end of these more detailed studies, we review the work of the Protestant schoolmen as a whole, there are two things that it most interestingly makes manifest. It shows alike what is the true function of theology—the statement of Christian doctrine as truth, and how absolutely necessary a theology is to any and every form of Christianity.

Luther, though he was a trained theologian and philosopher of the school of Occam, in his prophetic enthusiasm for the gospel he had rediscovered, wished to reduce theology to a minimum. Above all he wanted to get rid of apologetics, especially of all attempts to reduce Christianity to Aristotelianism. In an early "Disputation against the Scholastic theology," he maintained the theses:

"It is an error to say: Without Aristotle a theologian is not made. Rather, a theologian is not made, unless it is done without Aristotle. In brief, the whole of Aristotle is to theology, as darkness to light."[1]

In agreement with this attitude Melanchthon strove to set forth simply the practical doctrines of the Gospel, without philosophical prolegomena, or even so much philosophy as was implied in the doctrines of the Trinity and of the Person of Christ. His bold saying in the first edition of his Loci has often been quoted:

"To know Christ is to know His saving benefits,

[1] Theses 41, 43–45.

not as the schoolmen teach, to contemplate His natures or the modes of His Incarnation."[1]

In the later editions of the Loci, however, the doctrines of God, the Trinity and the Incarnation all reappear. Moreover while all religious knowledge was held by Melanchthon, as by Luther, to be sufficiently contained in Holy Scripture, and while the Loci themselves, even in their final form, were intended to be nothing but a key to the Scriptures, there was one problem that rose out of the interpretation of Scripture itself. It spoke allusively of many things, which required to be explained and understood. The nature of the world and of the things in it, the course of history, business, trade, manners and customs, all were implied. Hence Melanchthon, as the Preceptor Germaniæ, established subsidiary academic studies in physics and ethics as well as in grammar and rhetoric.

Finally, out of this arose once more the problem, so thoroughly and exhaustively discussed by the Protestant theologians, of the relation of reason and revelation. They distinguished a threefold use of reason in regard to Scripture. Gerhard explains this matter as follows :

" (1) There is the instrumental use (*usus organicus*) Reason brings with it, to draw out the treasures of Divine wisdom hidden in Holy Scripture, a knowledge of the grammatical properties of words, a rhetorical exposition of figures, and a physical knowledge of natural things, drawn from the philosophic disciplines. This use is to be most highly recommended, indeed it is necessary.

[1] *Loci Theologici*, Ed. Kolde, 1900, p. 63.

(2) As to the constructive use (*usus κατασκευαστικός*), it must be maintained: There is a certain natural knowledge of God (Rom. I, 19, 20), but that is necessarily subordinate to the knowledge of Him revealed from heaven in the Word. If there is any disagreement, natural knowledge must yield to revelation: so far as there is agreement, natural knowledge receives confirmation and certainty from revelation. In short, it must be like a handmaid and servant to revelation as its mistress, and must do it reverence.

(3) The destructive or refutative use (*usus ἀνασκευαστικός seu ἐλεγτικός*), so far as it is lawful, may thus be set forth in comparison. In the first place, erroneous doctrine must be refuted from the basis of Holy Scripture, the only proper principle of theology; and next, there may be added philosophical reasons, to show that the falsity is contrary not only to the light of grace, but also to the light of nature."[1]

It is clear that Gerhard has moved a long way from Luther's abhorrence of reason. He not only allows, but even encourages the use of reason in theology; though he carefully guards himself from suggesting that it can ever be allowed to compete with the Divine revelation in Holy Scripture. Still, it is plain that Gerhard wants to get as much out of reason as is possible. Reason is in every way to subserve faith, in explaining revelation, in leading up to it, and in refuting all antagonistic doctrines.

Thus may be understood the verdict of the historian Gass upon the Protestant Scholasticism:

"The Old Theology even in the day of its greatest

[1] Schmid, op. cit., p. 19.

outward domination was never so independent as it purposed to be, or as it appears, when its form is deduced simply from within and from its Church character and tendency. It aimed at a rationally tenable system, which brought it under the rule of the laws of scientific proof."[1]

Even still more important is the verdict of Troeltsch, as a philosophical theologian :

" The Orthodox Theology did not originate from the pure desire for knowledge, nor yet from the ideal of merely fixing the content of faith or the consciousness of the Church—these are modern conceptions of the nature of Dogmatic Theology, upon which a retreat has been made after the discovery of the invincible difficulties of its proper task. It rather originated, like all Dogmatic and like the ancient Dogma itself from the apologetic need of an orientation between the positive religious ideas and the other knowledge of a civilized people."[2]

IV

The forces that broke the power of the Protestant Scholasticism were partly external and partly internal. From the first it had to contend with many adversaries. It is interesting to look at the *antitheses* which follow the *theses* in such a work as the Lutheran Quenstedt's great *Theologia Didactico-polemica*. There is always

[1] Gass, *Geschichte der protestantichen Dogmatik*, I, p. vii.

[2] Troeltsch, *Vernunft und Offenbarung bei Johann Gerhard und Melanchthon*, p. 1.

in the first place the antithesis of Roman Catholicism, or of the Pontificii, as the Protestant doctors called their Roman adversaries. Then there is the antithesis of the mystical sects of Protestantism, the disciples of Schwenkfeld and Weigel, and so on. There is the internecine antithesis of Lutheran to Calvinist, and of Calvinist to Lutheran ; and connected with that, we have the inner antithesis of the liberal Reformed theology known as Arminianism. Still more hated and dreaded adversaries are the Socinians, warfare with whom is as constant and unremitting as it is with Rome itself.

During the seventeenth century the Protestant Scholasticism felt itself well able to contend with all these adversaries, in so far as in the main they shared its scientific presuppositions. Clothed in the double armour of reason and authority, it dealt tremendous blows right and left, and never doubted of victory. In the eighteenth century a great change took place. The new adversaries of orthodoxy were the Pietism which the Protestant Churches had fostered in their own bosom, and the Illumination which was the Continental development of the English Deism.

Pietism was the reaction of Luther's warm and emotional religion of trust (*fiducia*) upon the colossal system of dogmatic orthodoxy, which had taken it up into itself, and had left it only as a single element, even though it might be the central one of a great construction. The Pietists once more declared that religion was of the heart rather than of the head. There was heard again after many years the echo of Melanchthon's words : " To know Christ is to know His saving

benefits, not His natures or the modes of His Incarnation."

That was one form of the anti-dogmatic principle, which before had confronted the Protestant orthodoxy only in the comparatively uninfluential Protestant mystics, who may be regarded as the predecessors of the Pietists. The other form of the same principle was the rationalism of the Illumination. The beginning was the English Deism. Dissatisfied with the contending claims of the different Christian Churches, the English Deists sought a storm-free position, that should at once transcend the clash of creeds, and leave room for a reconciliation of religion to the new natural science and the philosophy influenced by it, which was rapidly displacing the traditional Aristotelianism, that had so long been the bulwark of theologians. To achieve their purpose, the Deists returned to the principles of the early Christian Apologists. They accepted from the orthodox theologians the idea of a natural religion, and proposed to treat Christianity as a renewal or republication of this simple faith. All superstructure of particular dogma beyond this, whether Roman or Protestant, was a corruption of the purity of the Christian religion, the time for the removal of which corruption was now come.

Pressed by their orthodox antagonists to show that their rational religion was the religion of the New Testament, the Deists began the historical criticism of the primitive documents of Christianity. They distinguished between gospels and epistles, and between the original Christian message and the adaptation of it to meet the needs of special Christian Churches.

They spoke of the "accommodation" of the simple ideas of Christianity to Jewish and heathen forms of thought, and in this way they sought to destroy the force of the argument brought against them, that whatever their religion might be, it certainly was not the religion of the New Testament.

The Illumination in Germany took up these ideas and developed them with German vigour and rigour. It further applied the same type of criticism to the history of Christian doctrine. "The history of dogma," says Loofs, "is a child of the German Illumination."[1]

The Protestant orthodoxy was now attacked both from without and from within. It could no longer maintain itself against its adversaries. On the one side it had to meet the complaint that it stifled the warmth of Christian devotion. On the other the rationalism it had brought to the support of the Christian religion threatened to destroy the dogma it was originally meant to sustain. The tendency of Pietism was to return from the scientifically formulated doctrines of Scholasticism to the Bible itself, and its freer and more figurative language. That of the Illumination was to treat all such Biblical figures as arabesques upon the simplicity of the religion of reason. On either side the cry was for something simpler than the Protestant Scholasticism had to offer, whether the simplicity that was sought and desired had a more emotional or a more intellectual colour.

[1] Loofs, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, p. 1.

v

The nineteenth century saw what was called in Germany a repristination of the Protestant dogma. But the repristinated dogma was a very different thing from the old dogma itself. It was in fact an attempt to found a renewed dogma upon the anti-dogmatic principle. Out of the eater was to come forth meat, and out of the strong to come forth sweetness.

The genius of Schleiermacher attempted to meet all demands at once, in that (1) he carried on the traditions of Pietism by declaring religion to be a thing of the heart, whose essence was an absolute feeling of dependence; (2) he met the rationalist interest of the Middle Ages, as it had been deepened by Kant, by asserting religion, as the consciousness of God, to have a metaphysical basis, and to be in fact the clue to the solution of the world-riddle; (3) he endeavoured to do justice to the positive element in Christianity by accepting the historical figure of Jesus as the Archetype, and as the Source for others, of communion with God.

By means of these principles he sought to illuminate the old dogma from within, and so could publish his system of theology under the name of "The Christian Faith exhibited in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Evangelical Church." By the latter Schleiermacher meant the Union of Lutheran and Reformed Churches to which he himself belonged, and he sought in his "Christian Faith" to get beneath

the antithesis of the two great Protestant Confessions to their common essence. The antithesis with Catholicism remained, but for Schleiermacher it was one to overcome. Catholicism and Protestantism were complementary forms of Christianity, the one emphasizing the Church, the other the individual. Both forms had their relative justification. Schleiermacher did not himself attempt to resolve the antithesis. He worked within Protestantism, and left the task to the future. In recent times it has occupied the attention of Canon Quick in this country and of Professor Heiler in Germany.

It would appear that a construction such as Schleiermacher's is the only form in which a Christian dogma can be maintained to-day, and if it is properly carried out, it need not lie open to the charge of Troeltsch, that it is an attempt to base theology upon the consciousness of the Church, in the recognition that its proper task of stating Christianity as truth has become impossible.

Religious experience, according to Schleiermacher (when the latter is rightly understood), is no mere subjective state, but has an assured metaphysical basis. It is our way of relating ourselves directly to ultimate reality. Even if it is no longer possible to relate the doctrines of religion directly to those of science, as the schoolmen did, still as long as we can assert that in religion we have hold of ultimate reality, its doctrines will have objective worth, and will be true, though in a different sphere from that of science. It is the work of philosophy to make possible the coherence of these two aspects of existence, and it can best

perform its task by relating the values expressed in Christian doctrine and in science to the other great value expressed in morals and in æsthetics, thus presenting the Universe in all its different spheres as a unity, in which each sphere mutually depends upon and supports the rest.

The groundwork of a modern Christian theology must lie inevitably in a metaphysical construction, inspired by Kant's moral argument. We may regard the world, as known to science, as a world which has already received the imprint of reason upon a chaotic and confused material. The ethical view of the same world, however, presupposes that it is not sufficiently rational, but that a further rationalization of it through the operation of human freedom is demanded. Now, the strange thing is this, that the very success of the sciences, in reducing the original chaos to law and order, seems to make it difficult to understand, how there can be new developments along the lines of freedom. For science is fundamentally deterministic, and determinism leaves no room for freedom.

The only possible reconciliation between these two points of view is to recognize that science does not tell us all about the world, when it conceives it along the lines of determination. We must supplement the scientific view of the world as determined with another view, which recognizes the advent into the midst of the very web of determinations of ever fresh and fresher emergents in the direction of the Good, which is the ethical aim. This means that the universe as known is at bottom one with the Universe as hoped for. The same Reason, that has so far brought forth the

world as it is, is enlisted to make it what it ought to become.

This inference, which is the necessary postulate of ethical action, finds support both in æsthetic experience and in religion. In æsthetic experience certain forms of nature or human art produce in us, altogether apart from our moral effort, the sense of harmony which is the mark of complete rationality. In religious experience there is something deeper still. Here the Reason, that is immanent in the universe, discloses itself to us as a transcendent Power, through the feeling of absolute dependence, which Schleiermacher so rightly indicated as the essence of religion. Such a Power, on which we depend, is a Power that we can only, for want of a better name, call Personal.

The various religions conceive this Power, and the relation thereto of the human spirit, in different ways. There is an evolution of religion, as there is of all concrete existence. But the highest forms of religion are two, and two only. One is the pantheistic form, which hardly distinguishes religion from the parallel æsthetic experience, except in so far as the former refers, not like the latter to some particular object, but to the whole universe. This kind of religion approximates itself to æsthetic experience, at the expense of being unable to synthesize itself with ethical experience. It accepts the harmony of the universe as already existent, and destroys the motive for ethical action, as is very evident in the purest form in which it has found expression, the Brahmanism of the Upanishads.

The other form of religion is the theistic type, which

transcends pantheism, in that it keeps alive the distinction between the actual and the ideal, which is so necessary to the very being of ethics. Yet this theistic religion can also synthesize the æsthetic point of view within itself. Religious experience is not only a dependence upon God, but is also a dependence upon Him for salvation. And what is salvation but the complete harmonization of outer and inner, of nature and spirit, which is partly a hope, but partly an actual experience given with the very feeling of dependence itself?

The Christian Dogma is in essence the relation of all these things to the Person of the historical Jesus Christ as the Founder of the Christian religion. It presupposes in Him the Source and Spring of the perfection of that religious experience, which we have been describing. It recognizes the fundamental identity of the Divine Spirit as experienced in the Christian Church with the Spirit which determined the human life of Jesus. It has to show, how by the power of this Spirit we are delivered from doubt, from distrust of God, from rebellion against Him, and from the sense of guilt, and are brought into a trust in His Fatherly goodness and mercy, which is the basis of a hope of eternal salvation, and to an obedience to His Divine will, which issues in the love of our fellow-men.

The particular doctrines of Christianity must be developed from this general point of view. The doctrine of God will exhibit His immanence in the universe. It will show the order of nature, the moral order, and the order of salvation, as progressive stages of His self-manifestation.

Man must be exhibited as having part in all three of

these orders, the natural order affording his basis, the moral order his ideal, and the order of salvation the harmony between the other two, alike within and without. Freedom must be shown as man's peculiar characteristic, and sin as its actual result.

Christ will be thought of as the focus of the Divine self-manifestation. It must be shown, how His words and works constitute the elements of God's Living Word to men, while the supreme sentence of God's grace is spoken effectively through His death, in which He offered Himself up completely to God, that God through Him might overcome the power of sin in the world, and establish a new and holier life within humanity. At the entrance of that Holy of Holies of the Christian religion, in which the believer contemplates, penitent yet with thankful adoration, the sacrifice of his Lord, the new dogma will inscribe the golden words of Bernard of Clairvaux :

" Non mors placuit, sed voluntas sponte morientis."[1]

The inner side of God's saving manifestation in the world, considered by itself, will yield the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The development of this doctrine will correspond to the *præparatio evangelica* before Christ in the world at large and especially in Israel, to the concentration of God's redeeming advance upon the world in Christ Himself, and to the continuance of His saving power, as gathered up in Christ, through the Church, the Gospel and the sacraments of the Gospel. A doctrine of faith, hope and love, will then show how the immanence of the Holy Spirit works out in the individual Christian.

[1] *De erroribus Abœlardi*, viii, 21.

It will be seen that the whole Christian dogma divides naturally into a description of three different lines of God's manifestation in the world. The first refers to His universal immanence, the second to His special manifestation in Christ, the third to His saving presence as the Holy Spirit. Since all things temporal have their grounds in eternity, these three modes of manifestation will have to be traced back to their roots in the being of God. Accordingly, a doctrine of the Trinity in Unity will be, not the presupposition, but the conclusion of the whole dogma.

VI

THE DECLINE OF DOGMA AND THE ANTI-DOGMATIC MOVEMENT

By Claude Jenkins, D.D., F.S.A.

VI

THE DECLINE OF DOGMA AND THE ANTI-DOGMATIC MOVEMENT.

THE attitude of the historical observer towards such a problem as the decline of dogma and the anti-dogmatic movement will probably be found to differ somewhat from that of the exponents of philosophical theories or of a dogmatic theology. The record of their successes and failures is part of the material of his own subject, and just because his own is a humbler rôle he may perhaps claim a greater freedom. It is not for him to identify dogma with either the old or the new Scholasticism, to contend that at a given period the chief supporters of either became less fully assured of its cogency and coherence or that the anti-dogmatic movement was less dogmatic than that which it assailed. None of these statements would seem to be true save with such limitations and explanations as to render them hardly worth making. Still less can he be constrained to uphold the thesis that dogma is either the inexplicable surd of theology or an organic system subject to the same laws of growth and decay as other organisms. And though it is the province of the student of history to interpret as well as to observe and to register, he will be wise to decline for himself participation in dialectical gymnastics.

A sixteenth-century Italian satirist, Trajano Boccalini, has a fable of a traveller. "He was disturbed by the importunate chirrupings of the grasshoppers; he would fain have slain them every one, but only got belated and missed his way; he need only have fared peacefully on his road, and the grasshoppers would have died of themselves before the end of a week." The fable is best known to later readers because D'Alembert included it in the introduction to the third volume of the *Encyclopédie* and many who have never seen the *Encyclopédie* have read Morley's *Diderot* where part of that introduction is quoted.[1] D'Alembert himself was reproached by a poor woman, with whom he lodged, with the words: "You will never be anything better than a philosopher, and what is a philosopher? 'Tis a madman who torments himself all his life, that people may talk about him when he is dead." We may add that if the chirrupings of philosophers are equally insistent with those of the grasshoppers the former do not die so easily; nor does the wise traveller venture either to disregard them or to attempt their extermination. It is utterly futile for the theologian to suppose that he can safely neglect the processes or conclusions of those who are engaged in speculative enquiry. But what is not so easy for us to picture to ourselves is the alarm which such enquiries have from time to time

[1] Morley, J., *Diderot and the Encyclopaedists* (Chapman & Hall, 1878), i, 149. It is curious that Morley did not think it worth while to notice that D'Alembert avowedly borrows the story from the preface to Voltaire's *Alzire* where, it must be confessed, it is better told. But it forms a striking conclusion to a wonderful piece of literary apologetic. The introduction will be found printed also in *Œuvres philosophiques historiques et littéraires d'Alembert* (Paris: Bastien. An. XIII [1805]), 363–402

excited in the minds of those who had been content to believe that in a world of change all was settled in relation to the highest matters. It must be remembered that the extent to which shock was experienced might and did indeed vary greatly. Abailard, Roger Bacon, Virgil of Salzburg, Copernicus, Galileo were not all men seeking to create what is vulgarly called a "sensation," and ecclesiastical authorities in general were concerned rather for the maintenance of the established order and the faith of the simple than with checking the activity of the human intellect. It may be said that the range was often unduly restricted, and that is true; but the distinction drawn between private opinion and public teaching was certainly in a measure recognized. And in regard to a later age it is to be noted that the desire to attack was by no means always present on the other side. Montaigne who has been called the "genius who more perhaps than any other undermined in France the foundations of belief," holding the reason incapable of attaining truth, respected the Church's doctrines on the ground of their salutary effect in practice. Montaigne died in 1593. In 1624 Lord Herbert of Cherbury in a work written in Latin and translated into French, but not into English, set himself to distinguish Truth from Revelation and to formulate a rational philosophy in which reason is to be safeguarded against its own misuse. In 1645 his work on "the religion of the Gentiles" detects in their several systems the underlying "common notions" which he had previously elucidated and described as "sacred principles" underived either from experience or observation and in some sense

necessary to both. If some have seen in his method an anticipation of Kant and others in his "five articles" the "Charter of Deism" his latter work appeared also to Hume "a natural history of religion." In 1651 a new light appears.

Hobbes, teaching on the one hand that "the end of knowledge is power" and on the other that Religion is "fear of power invisible feigned by the mind or imagined from tales publicly allowed," had at the same time made morality and religion alike matters of politics. But he had retained, for whatever reason, the view of Scripture as "written to show unto men the kingdom of God and to prepare their minds to become his obedient subjects," and had held that to enter the kingdom of God it is necessary to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God and to obey the laws of God. It would be unjust to say that it is merely a courteous recognition of an established institution; and those who found in the principles of the *Leviathan* a propædeutic either of atheism or of deism were being more logical than Hobbes himself. But save in that one point, admittedly an important one, he had claimed the right, and exercised it, to take nothing for granted and to build up a construction purely human.

So far it may be said the attitude of criticism and enquiry is negative or non-committal in regard to revealed religion rather than hostile, or is like that of the general who is content to mask his opponent's positions while he himself presses forward. But it was not always to remain so.

In a really brilliant sketch at the opening of the

"French Revolution" volume of the *Cambridge Modern History* Mr. P. F. Willert describes "the irreverent banter or ironical reverence with which the most solemn subjects are treated" in Bayle's *Dictionary*, the "skill with which the reader is insensibly led to the conviction that he is far less certain about things than he imagined, the insidious suggestion that, although all reason is against such a creed, it is perhaps as well to believe in God, in Providence, and in immortality—if you are fool enough." All this, he says, in Bayle breathes the very spirit of "philosophism." And he adds a comment not less suggestive in another direction: "The method of the *Encyclopédie* as described by Diderot is the method of Bayle's *Dictionary*: 'Articles dealing with respectable prejudices must expound them deferentially; the edifice of clay must be shattered by referring the reader to other articles in which the opposite truths are established on sound principles. This method of enlightening the reader has an immediate influence on those who are quick of apprehension, an indirect and latent influence on all'." . . . "One liberal principle was openly advocated by the cautious and conservative Bayle—that of toleration. His *Commentaire philosophique sur le Compelle Intrare* was published in 1686, three years before Locke's *Letters on Toleration*. Free thought is, he argues, a natural right, since neither religious creeds nor philosophic theory admit of demonstration, but are matters of conjecture. Nor is it dangerous to allow men to exercise this right, for even an atheist is not necessarily a bad citizen. Society could exist without religion." Locke died in 1704, Bayle in 1706.

The lineal successor of Bayle is Voltaire, those of Locke are in a sense the English Deists. Yet to Voltaire also Locke is "the only reasonable metaphysician that he knew." And there is real irony in the position.

It has often been pointed out that when in 1695 Locke published his work entitled *The Reasonableness of Christianity* and affirmed revelation as a support for morality nothing was further from his intention than to provide arguments for such a work as that published in the following year by Toland entitled *Christianity not mysterious, showing that there is nothing in the Gospel contrary to Reason nor above it, and that no Christian Doctrine can properly be called a Mystery.* That title contains two assumptions neither of them indisputable: (*a*) that there is an antithesis between Reason and Mystery; (*b*) that the scope of human reason is such that there is nothing above it and that which is apparently above it must be rejected. The result of these and similar speculations was not so much to raise man to the level of God as to reduce God to the measure of a man. Christianity becomes systematized, in a sense mechanized, a code of ethics as devoid, save in a strictly limited sense, of sanctions as of warmth and life. Locke might quite legitimately have objected to the conclusions drawn from arguments of which he is certainly in one way the father, but the first observation which will occur to the historical student is that the method adopted is open to criticism not so much on metaphysical or mathematical principles which may or may not lie within his own knowledge or province but in regard to a treatment of historical evidence which is wholly arbitrary. Thought-forms

of one age may be as the bed of Procrustes to another, and the dogmatic theologian loses rather than gains if he seeks to impose unnecessary limitations on speculation or to deny the freedom of enquiry claimed whether by an Abailard or a Collins. Historical criticism also becomes more scientific, and he must recognize the fact. There is a real issue raised both as to the evidence for and from, and the true method of regarding, prophecy and miracles. But the historical student is something more than *amicus curiae*, he is the defender of Truth itself in insisting that the subject-matter of his own studies and investigations is one which warring disputants are not at liberty to use and abuse as they will. This is not to claim infallibility for the individual professor but that canons of criticism shall not be bent this way or that as may happen to suit the argument of the moment, and further that the only prejudice which is not dangerous is one in favour of fair dealing even where one disagrees. Two or three examples may be permitted. Towards the end of the seventeenth century Archbishop Tillotson, the most famous preacher of his day, "than whom none better understood human nature,"[1] may be found preaching on "the eternity of hell torments" or confuting the Socinians. In both cases he does so with a moderation which belongs to the temper of the man: it is equally characteristic of the time that that moderation is mistaken, quite unjustly, for unorthodoxy.[2] Among

[1] Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation* (London, 1730), p. 64.

[2] Or worse: *cf.* George Whitefield's words (Philip, R., *Life and Times of the Rev. George Whitefield, M.A.*, London: Virtue, 1838, p. 195) in 1741: "In my zeal, during my journey through America, I had written two well-meant, though ill-judged, letters against England's

the Nonjurors there is certainly no lack either of dogma or of dogmatism. Henry Dodwell, one of them, whom Hearne regarded as "the greatest scholar in Europe" when he died, a Conformist, in 1711, is represented on the other hand not altogether unfairly by Lecky as holding that "our souls are naturally mortal but become immortal by baptism, if administered by an Episcopalian clergyman. Pagans and unbaptized infants cease to exist at death; but Dissenters who have neglected to enter the Episcopalian fold are kept alive by a special exercise of the divine power in order that they may be, after death, eternally damned."[1] On the other hand, Tenison whom Evelyn regarded as "one of the most profitable preachers in the Church of England, being also of a most holy conversation, very learned and ingenious" not only seemed to Swift "a very dull man who had a horror of anything like levity in the clergy, especially of whist" but because of a toleration which sometimes overcame a natural bent for controversy was the object of criticism from those who recognized chiefly in vigour of language the unquestionable accents of orthodoxy.

two great favourites, 'The whole Duty of Man' and Archbishop Tillotson, who, I said, knew no more about religion than Mahomet."

[1] Lecky, W. E. H., *A History of the Church of England in the Eighteenth Century.* New Edition (Longmans, 1892), i, 108 ff. Cf. Dodwell, H., *An Epistolary Discourse, Proving, from the Scriptures and the first Fathers, that the Soul is a Principle Naturally Mortal; but Immortalized Actually by the Pleasure of God, to Punishment; or, to Reward, by its Union with the Divine Baptismal Spirit. Wherein is proved that None have the Power of Giving this Divine Immortalizing Spirit, since the Apostles, but only the BISHOPS.* (London: Printed for R. Smith, at the Angel and Bible, without Temple-bar, 1706). The book is rather scarce, but no one who reads its closely packed pages will ever lose the impression received.

The precise extent to which social conditions affected religious observances at any given time is far less easy to determine than Leslie Stephen's remarks might suggest to a reader.[1] And the period 1660–1760 is one of many in which cross-currents make it hazardous to argue from religious observance to religious belief. There were times when the Court exercised an undoubted influence for evil which some at least deplored, but we must guard carefully against exaggerating the possible range of that influence. And in the England of the early eighteenth century as in the Rome of the last days of the Republic the maintenance of external observances was favoured for political reasons by many whose own creed was either a refined materialism or speculative agnosticism or a combination of both. What Walpole or Bolingbroke exactly believed might be hard to determine, but neither had any doubt of the expediency of "preserving the Establishment" if only for the purpose of securing the obedience of the vulgar. In the little tract called "The Sentiments of a Church of England Man, with Respect to Religion and Government,"[2] which offended the Whigs, Swift in 1708 urges that "though it makes an odd sound, yet it is necessary to say, that whoever professes himself a member of the church of England, ought to believe a God, and his providence, together with revealed religion, and the divinity of Christ."[3] And in another still more

[1] See especially the notable Introductory Chapter to the third edition of Stephen's *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (Smith Elder, 1902).

[2] *Works of Jonathan Swift, D.D.* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1814), viii, 383 ff.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 387.

famous and written in the same year—" An Argument to prove that the Abolishing of Christianity in England may, as things now stand, be attended with some inconveniencies, and perhaps not produce those many good effects proposed thereby " he suggests that he does not " think it wholly groundless, or " his " fears altogether imaginary, that the abolishing Christianity may perhaps bring the church into danger."[1] Of course, he maliciously observes, " the system of the gospel, after the fate of other systems, is generally antiquated and exploded ; and the mass or body of the common people, among whom it seems to have had its latest credit, are now grown as much ashamed of it as their betters ; opinions, like fashions, always descending from those of quality to the middle sort, and thence to the vulgar, where at length they are dropped and vanish."[2] In 1709 in " A Project for the Advancement of Religion and the Reformation of Manners," he says that he supposes that " it will be granted, that hardly one in a hundred among our people of quality or gentry, appears to act by any principle of religion ; that great numbers of them do entirely discard it, and are ready to own their disbelief of all revelation in ordinary discourse. Nor is the case much better among the vulgar, especially in great towns, where the profaneness and ignorance of handicraftsmen, small traders, servants, and the like, are to a degree very hard to be imagined greater."[3] He asks " whether it be not a shame to our country, and a scandal to Christianity, that in many towns, where there is a

[1] *Works of Jonathan Swift, D.D.* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1814), viii, 197. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 185. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 205.

prodigious increase in the number of houses and inhabitants, so little care should be taken for the building of churches, that five parts in six of the people are absolutely hindered from hearing divine service? particularly here in London, where a single minister, with one or two sorry curates, has the care sometimes of about twenty thousand souls incumbent on him; a neglect of religion so ignominious, in my opinion, that it can hardly be equalled in any civilized age or country."[1] A hundred years or so later the same kind of criticism may be observed in the *Farington Diary*, but the immediate effect of these strictures was seen in the vote of the House of Commons in 1711 under the influence of Atterbury[2] and others of a duty of 1s. on every chaldron of coal for three years to be applied to defray the cost of the erection of fifty new churches in London.

There is an importance about these and similar writings greater than the precedent which their results afforded for a further building of churches after Waterloo, and far greater than the suggestion that religion would benefit if it were "once understood to be the necessary step to favour and preferment."[3] It is in the impression that they give of the conditions of Swift's age and of the causes which seem to him to underlie those conditions. Swift was accustomed to use in the pulpit before his sermons a prayer which included the petition "Make thy pastors burning and shining lights, able

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 226–7.

[2] For this statement in Walter Scott's footnote to Swift (*op. cit.*, viii, 226), cf. also J. Nichols' edition of Atterbury *Epistolary Correspondence*, etc., (London, 1783), esp. ii, 309–14, 347.

[3] Swift's *Works*, viii, 212.

to convince gainsayers, and to save others and themselves."[1] Yet in his well-known "Letter to a Young Clergyman lately entered into Holy Orders," written in January, 1719–20, he writes "I do not find that you are any where directed in the canons or articles, to attempt explaining the mysteries of the Christian religion. And indeed, since Providence intended there should be mysteries, I do not see how it can be agreeable to piety, orthodoxy, or good sense, to go about such a work. For, to me, there seems to be a manifest dilemma in the case; if you explain them, they are mysteries no longer; if you fail, you have laboured to no purpose. What I should think most reasonable and safe for you to do upon this occasion, is, upon solemn days, to deliver the doctrine as the church holds it; and confirm it by scripture."[2] He deprecates the preaching against atheism, deism, freethinking and the like which was fashionable among young divines, partly on the ground that such persons as hold these opinions do not usually go to church and that "the congregation is but little edified for the sake of three or four fools, who are past grace," partly because he does not "think it any part of prudence to perplex the minds of well-disposed people with doubts, which probably would never have otherwise come into their heads."[3]

Now it must be remembered that Swift, whatever else he may have been, was certainly not obscurantist. He would have the clergy not inveigh against ancient philosophy but read it and use it. Few men were so

[1] Printed in full in Swift's *Works*, viii, 7.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 355. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 356.

vigorous in controversy, and even if he described the writings of "Asgil, Tindal, Toland, Coward, and forty more"[1] as trumpery, he did not confine himself merely to abuse. Only, as the sermon "On Sleeping in Church" shows, he had a very definite opinion as to the purpose and method of the preacher.[2] Of his own conception of the proper treatment of a doctrinal subject anyone may judge who will take the trouble to read his sermon "On the Trinity,"[3] of which a contemporary said that "he advances every position that can be established upon so incomprehensible a subject. He sustains the belief, avows the doctrine, and adapts the matter of faith, as well as possible, to the human capacity. His manner of reasoning is masterly, and his arguments are nervous."[4]

It is curious to set beside Swift's observations those of one in our own day who will certainly not be suspected of a bias in favour of Ecclesiasticism. In the first chapter of his *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* Lecky says: "Never was there a period less characterised by that intellectual torpor which we are accustomed to associate with ecclesiastical domination, yet in very few periods of English history did the English Church manifest so great a power as in the reign of Anne."[5] It is true that he adds later that "State Churches, though they have many merits, are not the schools of heroism"[6] and also that

[1] "Argument against abolishing Christianity," Swift's *Works*, viii, 188.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 136–46. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 27–41.

[4] Quoted by Walter Scott (Swift's *Works*, viii, 27) from John Boyle, fifth Earl of Orrery and of Cork. Boyle's later *Remarks on the Life and Writings of Jonathan Swift* was a less generous estimate.

[5] Lecky, *op. cit.*, i, 76–77. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

"monopolising as" the Church of England "did, by its command of the Universities, the higher education, and attracting by its great rewards a very large proportion of the talent of the country, its power in an age when there was very little serious scepticism among the educated, and no considerable rival organization among the poor, appeared almost irresistible."[1] But there is another aspect, if I may still quote, which shows a different approach: "Appeals," he says, "both to authority and the stronger passions gradually ceased. The more doctrinal aspects of religion were softened down or suffered silently to recede, and, before the eighteenth century had much advanced, sermons had very generally become mere moral essays, characterized chiefly by a cold, good sense, and appealing almost exclusively to prudential motives. The essay writers, whose works consisted in a great measure of short moral dissertations, set the literary taste of the age; and they had a powerful effect on the pulpit. The popularity of the sermons of Secker greatly strengthened the tendency, and it was only towards the close of the century that the influence of the Methodist movement, extending gradually through the Established Church, introduced a more emotional, and at the same time a more dogmatic type of preaching."[2]

The wheel had come round again full circle, if that be so. But the careful student of the eighteenth century, perhaps in proportion to the extent of his reading, finds it easier to observe this or that phenom-

[1] Lecky, *op. cit.*, i, 92.
[2] Lecky, *op. cit.*, i, 105.

enon than to commit himself to general statements. Again, the upholder of religious dogma has always to remember that while he may be justified in saying that he observes in those whose tenets are directly or indirectly at variance with his own a marked tendency to dogmatism he must, if theology be the Queen of Sciences, find a place in his own system for any elements of truth which their teaching may contain. There is, for example, in Père Simon's critical work on the Old Testament a theory of construction so erroneous as to amount to a grave blunder, but his contribution to knowledge is not thereby wholly vitiated. Again, the student must make his account of the long succession of enquirers whose labours are illustrated in Albert Schweitzer's well-known work *Von Reimarus zu Wrede.*[1] When Hermann Reimarus, some forty years later than Simon, came into notice, he inaugurated a further movement. In 1727 he became a Professor of Hebrew at Hamburg, and being not merely a Hebraist but a humanist and a student of natural science was led to conclusions which not only denied the inerrancy of the Bible but impugned the good faith as well as the good sense of those responsible for it or even described in it. His treatment of the subject may have been alike presumptuous and perverse. Such a judgment of him is one which the later student is perfectly entitled, even perhaps bound, to make. But when Reimarus sought to establish in

[1] Tübingen, 1906. Translated into English as *The Quest of the Historical Jesus. A Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, by W. Montgomery, with Preface by F. C. Burkitt (Black, 1910).

natural religion the wisdom and goodness of God the Creator, to whose Nature miracles would be as incongrous as the partiality implied in the conception of a special revelation or series of revelations to a peculiar people, there is as certainly a constructive effort in his teaching as in his defence of immortality as implied in man's essential nature and in God's purpose in creation. He rejects the accepted evidences of revealed religion and, in the conventional sense, revelation itself, not in order to get rid of Religion as he understood it but in order to lay bare its sure foundation in *principia* at once more original and more august. He held that "religion is conducive to our happiness and alone brings satisfaction," while neglecting as we may think to observe that religion as he conceived it must either make in practice some advance on its principles or be found suitable only for mathematicians. But what he has been trying to do is, with whatever reservations and qualifications may be necessary, in accord with the speculative quest for Truth pursued in their several ways by Descartes and Leibnitz and Christian Wolff.

Johann Salomo Semler, who has been called "the father of German rationalism," was a historical student, who was in turn a professor of philology and history and of theology: he ended by attacking Reimarus and defending Lutheran orthodoxy on lines which many thought inconsistent with his former positions. What the student has to learn is that a line of historical criticism is neither necessarily bad because it impugns nor good because it supports conclusions regarded as orthodox from whatever point of view.

The dogmatic positions assailed in the seventeenth or the eighteenth centuries were also sometimes good, sometimes bad; but again we must bear in mind that while the handling of the critical method may sometimes prevent a man absorbed in admiration of his "organon" from seeing the truth, it can never in the end impair Truth itself even though it may display it sometimes in a wrong perspective. There is truth in Christian Wolff's lecture on "the Practical Philosophy of the Chinese" with its appreciation of the ethical teaching of Confucius. There is truth in Matthew Tindal's treatment of the problem in his famous dialogue "Christianity as Old as the Creation: or, the Gospel, a Republication of the Religion of Nature," which appeared anonymously and without the name of the printer in 1730. But in neither is there the whole truth. If we ask what suggested to Tindal, an advocate, the title which he chose we shall find the answer in a passage which he quotes from "Dr. Sherlock (now Bishop of *Bangor*) who, in a Sermon for propagating the Gospel (where we may expect every thing which recommends it), says . . . 'The Religion of the Gospel is the *true Original Religion* of *Reason* and *Nature*.— That the Doctrine of Repentance, with which the Gospel set out in the World, had reference to the *Law* of *Reason* and *Nature*, against which Men had every where offended: And since Repentance infers the Necessity of a future Reformation, and a *Return* to that Duty and Obedience, *from which*, by Transgression, we are fallen; the Consequence is manifestly this, that the *Gospel* was a *Republication of the Law of Nature*, and its *Precepts declarative* of that *Original Religion*,

which was as *old* as the *Creation*.'"[1] Sherlock was an opponent of Hoadly, whom he was later to succeed, and the Deists, and was, of course, still living to read the use made of his words. Tindal made man's reason the means of discerning between that which is and that which is not worthy of God. He went on further to argue: "Nothing can be requisite to discover True Christianity, and to preserve it in its native Purity, free from all Superstition, but, after a strict Scrutiny, to admit nothing to belong to it, except what our Reason tells us is worthy of having God for its Author. And if it be evident, that we can't discern whether any instituted Religion contains every thing worthy, and nothing unworthy of a divine Original, except we can antecedently by our Reason discern what is, or is not worthy of having God for its Author; it necessarily follows, that natural and reveal'd Religion can't differ: Because whatever Reason shews to be worthy of having God for its Author, must belong to Natural Religion; and whatever Reason tells us is unworthy of having God for its Author, can never belong to the True Reveal'd Religion."[2] It has been said that "into this single dilemma is compressed the quintessence of Deism."[3] But it is a curious fact that while in general the English Deists were far more respectful than the German rationalists to Christianity as a system and certainly to the Figure of Christ, that Figure recedes into the background even as a source of moral energy. An ideal reign of universal benevolence has a pleasing

[1] Quoted in *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, p. 68.

[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 196–7.

[3] G. C. Joyce, *s.v.* "Deism" in Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, iv, 536.

sound, but the strength of revealed religion, however interpreted, has lain in a doctrine of grace and of a personal relation between the Creator and the being created, between the sinner and Him who has wrought deliverance, and for that systems at best semi-Pelagian had little either of use or of appreciation. But it must be remembered that the temper of the age may be discerned at best imperfectly if we confine our examination to the exponents of novel methods of attack on traditional beliefs, or restatements which seemed to evacuate them of meaning. Nothing is more characteristic of the several nations than the various ways in which attack and defence were conducted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England and France and Germany. If there is something typically English in the attitude of the Deists, so is there also in that of Joseph Butler. The "Fifteen Sermons preached at the Rolls Chapel" and published in 1726, the "Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the constitution and course of Nature. To which are added two chief dissertations, (1) of Personal Identity (2) of the Nature of Virtue," constitute not merely a "monumentum aere perennius" of the author but of a theology singularly English in presentation. Leslie Stephen in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, placed side by side two estimates of it: that of John Henry Newman who learnt from it that the world is a "sacramental system" in which "material phenomena are both the types and instruments of the things unseen,"[1] and that of James Martineau that Butler has unintentionally "furnished . . . one of

[1] Cf. Newman's *Apologia*, Part iii. (in later editions, chap. i).

the most terrible persuasives to atheism ever produced."[1] Both cannot well be right, yet both views were honestly held, and we may challenge the modern reconstructor of a dogmatic system to show upon which side he stands when dealing with "Butler's characteristic doctrine" that "probability is the guide of life." But there is another element upon which it is no less right to insist, viz., the austere simplicity and majesty of Butler's ethical system. From one point of view, no doubt, we may compare his manner with Archbishop Secker's in whose hands "the gracious assistance of God's infinite goodness" became when he set himself to revise the Coronation service for George III "the merciful superintendency of the Divine Providence" and say that that gospel never saved a sinner; but there is a type of mind to which Butler's ethical teaching might well prove truly evangelical. And we may even be bold enough to set beside this what we may regard as the most remarkable passage in John Morley's study of Voltaire. He defends the author of *Candide* against those who see in him only the mocking derisive master of bitter irony. He quotes letters in which Voltaire says again and again that this is no time for laughing: he speaks of religious atrocities as kindling in Voltaire a "blaze of anger and pity that remains among the things of which humanity has most reason to be proud." But he adds: "It is necessary to admit from the point of view of impartial criticism, that Voltaire had one defect of character, of extreme importance in a leader of this memorable

[1] Cf. Martineau, J., *Studies of Christianity* (Longman, 1858), p: 93. The quotation is not verbally exact.

and direct attack. With all his enthusiasm for things noble and lofty, generous and compassionate, he missed the peculiar emotion of holiness, the soul and life alike of the words of Christ and St. Paul, that indefinable secret of the long hold of mystic superstition over so many high natures, otherwise entirely prepared for the brightness of the rational day. From this impalpable essence which magically surrounds us with the mysterious and subtle atmosphere of the unseen, changing distances and proportions, adding new faculties of sight and purpose, extinguishing the flames of disorderly passion in a flood of veritably divine aspiration, we have to confess that the virtue went out in the presence of Voltaire." He " has said no word, nor even shown an indirect appreciation of any word said by another, which stirs or expands the emotional susceptibility, indefinite exaltation, and far-swelling inner harmony, which De Maistre and others have known as the love of God, and for which a better name, as covering most varieties of form and manifestation, is holiness, deepest of all the words that defy definition. Through the affronts which his reason received from certain pretensions both in the writers and in some of those whose actions they commemorated, this sublime trait in the bible, in both portions of it, was unhappily lost to Voltaire. He had no ear for the finer vibrations of the spiritual voice."[1]

That is, at first sight, a judgment of great severity ; and probably there will not be wanting some to whom it will seem to be unjust. Nor if so could it be an

[1] Morley, J., *Voltaire* (Chapman & Hall, 1872), pp. 228–9, " Religion."

adequate answer that at least it was not more unjust than was Voltaire himself to Christianity. There are few who could claim truthfully to have read the whole of his writings, but one in whose memory linger not only passages of perversity or historical misjudgment but, let us say, the last scene of *Alzire* or the letters to the King of Prussia or certain utterances at least in "Le Dîner du Comte de Boulainvilliers," or certain sections of the "Dictionnaire philosophique" may fairly say at least that it is difficult to read Voltaire at his best and least controversial level without the sense that there *is* something that is missing. It would be monstrous to say that there is no vibration of the spiritual voice heard by one who shows Voltaire's passionate indignation against injustice and wrong under whatever auspices they are wrought; but anyone who takes the trouble to examine as he may do with the expenditure of two or three days' labour what Voltaire understands by the aspect of religion which he finds it possible to recognize with respect and acceptance will see the point of Morley's statement and may endeavour to estimate dispassionately its value.

There were and are many to whom Voltaire is the great enemy, but there are points which in the heats of controversy are forgotten. The one thing that neither wit nor irony nor ridicule can kill is Truth, and the defender of orthodoxy has to ask himself not how can I by superior wit or irony or ridicule get the better of my wicked assailant but what exactly is it that I am seeking to defend; and it is because he has often not thought out that question that he so often involves

both himself and others in difficulty. It is useless to say: I am going to assume the results of criticism, historical and scientific, to find a place for the advance of knowledge and to recognize the existence of new categories or to carry the war into the country of the scientist, assumed for the purpose to be the enemy, and to demonstrate amid applause the provisional character of his conclusions. It is useless merely to do this and stop there and to leave unanswered the question What then? The student who proceeds from a reading of Locke and of Bolingbroke and of Pope to a study of Voltaire will see something at any rate of the effect of English lines of thought converging and then curiously diffracted through the medium of Voltaire's mind. It would probably not be impossible to show that the effect of historical and philosophical flaws or misconceptions in their source had thus been intensified rather than corrected in the process of transmission. But the triumph won in such a demonstration is a poor one, however spectacular, if it merely takes advantage of the enemy's blunders: it is even profoundly immoral if in relation to the highest matters the defender is seeking to defend a position which he knows in his inmost mind a more acute criticism could have shown to be untenable. "Non tali auxilio nec defensoribus istis" may well be the sentiment of anyone who really cares for Truth. It is merely an affair of outposts, for example, to display the equal impiety and ineffectiveness of the particular attack on this or that miracle or class of miracles when the real issue is known to be far deeper and more fundamental. The modern enquirer is justified in

asking the modern apologist what it is exactly that he is prepared to defend, and justified in desiring from him a statement of what he conceives to be the main lines of defence. He will not ask of him in regard to such matters the rigidity of strict mathematical demonstration—to use a phrase which is losing a good deal of its meaning—nor greatly respect attempts to provide it which he knows to be likely to be fallacious. But he will expect him not to build on the gaps in science and to stand inflexibly for honesty in the handling of such evidence as may be available. Sometimes the answer which will win his highest respect may be just simply "I do not know."

There are lines of defence or attack in regard to which the apologist needs explicitly or implicitly to make his position clear. John Morley sees in Rousseau the third great power in eighteenth-century France between the encyclopædic party and the Church and holds that it was the spiritual part of him that made him so. "It was Rousseau," he says, "and not the feeble controversialists put up from time to time by the Jesuits and other ecclesiastical bodies, who proved the effective champion of religion, and the only power who could make head against the triumphant onslaught of the Voltaireans. He gave up christian dogmas and mysteries, and throwing himself with irresistible ardour upon the emotions in which all religions have their root and their power, he breathed new life into them, he quickened in men a strong desire to have them satisfied, and he beat back the army of emancipators with the loud and incessantly repeated cry that they were not come to deliver the human mind, but to root out

all its most glorious and consolatory attributes. This immense achievement accomplished, the great framework of a faith in god and immortality and providential government of the world thus preserved, it was an easy thing by-and-by for the churchmen to come back, and once more unpack and restore to their old places the temporarily discredited paraphernalia of dogma and mystery."[1]

When Lessing published *Nathan der Weise* in 1779 he said that while the theologians of all revealed religions would resent it they would be careful not to attack it publicly and that he himself would be satisfied if it were read with interest and if one reader in a thousand were led to doubt the evidence and universality of his religion. The Jewish merchant, the Muhammadan Sultan, the Christian Templar are human beings as well as exponents of religious ideas. Not only are human relations made to transcend religious differences in the working out of the drama, but the story of the three rings, which Lessing borrowed from Boccaccio and which suggested the idea of the play, is so transformed that, instead of one ring being true and having the virtue of making its wearer pleasing to God and men while the other two are false, they are all substitutes for the one true ring which has probably been lost : each of the possessors had his ring from his father : let each believe his ring to be the true one. Each then has something that gives his own possession value : none can claim exclusive supremacy over the rest. In proportion as the possession of each promotes the highest ethical ideals of which the possessor is

[1] Morley, J., *Rousseau* (Chapman & Hall, 1873), i, 312–3.

capable he may be regarded as sharing in the quality of being pleasing to God and men which the true ring was supposed to impart. But he gains it by his own conscious pursuit of those ideals and the ethical value exists apart from any considerations arising out of the investigation of the theological and philosophical basis of the religious beliefs professed. As a play *Nathan der Weise* had only a qualified success: as a weapon of propaganda its force has been very great. The underlying conception is widely entertained at the present day and the argument is one which the modern upholder of dogmatic theology is bound to meet. It cannot fairly be described either as irrational or atheistic save by a neglect of what lies behind it which would amount to a falsification of history.

There is another issue equally interesting to the historian and the philosopher upon which the dogmatic theologian who combines both has also an opinion to form. John Morley speculates as to what might have been the effect upon Voltaire had he really been able to study and think out the statements of Hume, whom he places second to Locke. Hume's *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* was published in 1751, his *Natural History of Religion* in 1757 and his *Dialogues on Natural Religion* in 1779. It is the *Natural History of Religion* which would most have affected Voltaire's treatment. Morley quotes the statement that the only point of theology on which the consent of mankind is nearly universal is that "there is [an] invisible, intelligent power in the world, but whether this power be supreme or subordinate, whether confined to one being or distributed among several, what attributes,

qualities, connexions, or principles of action, ought to be ascribed to those beings ; concerning all these points there is the widest difference in the popular systems of theology."[1] We may add another extract on our own account : " The whole is a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery. Doubt, uncertainty, suspension of judgement appear the only result of our most accurate scrutiny concerning this subject. But such is the frailty of human reason, and such the irresistible contagion of opinion, that even this deliberate doubt could scarcely be upheld, did we not enlarge our view, and opposing one species of superstition to another, set them a-quarrelling ; while we ourselves, during their fury and contention, happily make our escape into the calm, though obscure, region of philosophy." [2] It is one of the tragedies of literary history that Swift died a generation before Hume wrote. But the intellectual world had received a challenge and if it survived the encounter it was only after sustaining a rude shock. There is a picture in Hume's correspondence of a young man at Geneva reading his works. A friend writes to Hume about him explaining that " he is in orders, but he is very very low Church. To speak plain language, I believe him to be a sort of disciple of your own ; and though he does not carry matters quite so far, yet you have given him notions not very consistent with his priestly character."[3] Col. Edmondstonne asks Hume to determine whether the young

[1] *Natural History of Religion*, Sect. iv. (*Philosophical Works of David Hume*. New edit., Edinburgh : Constable, 1825), iv, 450.

[2] Op. cit., Sect. xiv. *ad fin. Works, ut supra*, iv, 513.

[3] Burton, J. H., *Life and Correspondence of David Hume* (Edinburgh : Tait, 1846), ii, 185. The date seems to be March, 1764.

man on returning to England ought to assume the character of a clergyman or a layman. The answer is based purely on motives of self-interest with the addition "It is putting too great a respect on the vulgar, and on their superstitions, to pique one's self on sincerity with regard to them. Did ever one make it a point of honour to speak truth to children or madmen. If the thing were worthy being treated gravely, I should tell him that the Pythian oracle, with the approbation of Xenophon, advised every one to worship the gods νομω πολεως. I wish it were still in my power to be a hypocrite in this particular. The common duties of society usually require it; and the ecclesiastical profession only adds a little more to the innocent dissimulation, or rather simulation, without which it is impossible to pass through the world."[1]

It sounds incredible, and the mere suspicion of the tolerance of such an attitude could only result in a steady diminution both of influence and credit whether in 1764 or 1929. But how was it to be met? There was a Norrisian Professor at Cambridge at the end of the eighteenth century who seems to have won the heart of Sir Leslie Stephen by saying that it would tend to "promote moderation, and in the end agreement, if we were industriously on all occasions to represent our own doctrine as wholly unintelligible." Stephen is unfair in representing this theology as almost identical with Paley's and still more unfair in saying: "Let us respect the simplicity which supposes in good faith that theologians would ever adopt formulæ intended to unite rather than to divide." Cambridge had made

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 187–8.

Regius Professor of Divinity in 1771 a professor who had taken up chemistry because he was tired with mathematics and natural philosophy, who said of himself that "he knew as much of divinity as could reasonably be expected of a man whose course of studies had been directed to, and whose time had been fully occupied in, other pursuits." It is characteristic of the time that it should be one of agitation to relieve the clergy of the burden of subscription: it is equally characteristic of Richard Watson to support the movement anonymously as "a Christian Whig" and to try to meet Gibbon in an *Apology for Christianity* and Thomas Paine in an *Apology for the Bible*. What few saw and fewer understood was the effect that the combination of speculative activity and new conditions of life resulting from social upheaval was tending to produce not in the studies of scholars and professors and clergy but in the homes of the people, in workshops and wherever men congregated for whom the established order had brought nothing that was not capable of betterment by change. What are called "The Theological Works of Thomas Paine" as collected in 1818 are strange reading nowadays, but what is permanent in them is the effort to escape from materialism by the vindication of natural religion. It is the province of the Christian apologist in every age to show what Bishop Watson certainly did little to help Paine to see, wherein really lies the assurance of God's response to human need in the revelation of Himself.

VII

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF DOGMA

By H. Maurice Relton, D.D.

VII

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF DOGMA

IN previous papers the meaning of dogma has been defined, and in this enquiry we are to understand by the term a body of doctrine stamped with ecclesiastical authority and in some sense representing an attempted intellectual presentation of the truth of historical Christianity. Our problem is the need of its reconstruction in the light of modern thought. The modern situation created by our advancing knowledge in every department of human research presents us with an insistent question which the Church must face: does a growing knowledge necessitate a growing creed? An expanding knowledge of the material universe has its repercussions in the world of philosophical speculation. Must it not also necessarily affect our religious philosophy? Ultimately our question will resolve itself into this: To meet the modern situation, do we need a reconstruction of dogma and a representation of Christianity in terms of modern thought or do we need a new religion?

At the outset of our enquiry we must clear the ground by defining precisely what we are to understand by Christianity in the light of its origin and history.

Christianity arose historically in a certain context which is judged to have been in some sense the

culminating point of a progressive revelation. The claim thus made for it at the outset is startling and challenging to our modern ears. It is "good news" supernaturally derived, though historically mediated. It is the product not of human speculation but of Divine disclosure. It claims to give us authentic tidings of things unseen. Christianity in this sense is of supernatural origin, though rooted in history. The Apostolic Church was the trustee of a "tradition" or "faith" once for all delivered. The function of the Church was not to add to or subtract from the Faith thus committed to its care but to spread abroad the good news, to explicate its significance for the world and human life and to safeguard this revealed truth from corruption and contamination. The Faith behind the Creeds originated in a living Person revealing Himself and imparting His message to persons. The content of this Faith is to be found in the impressions made upon those persons most intimately associated with certain happenings in Palestine in the first century. Those impressions are embodied in certain writings which the Church accepts as a trustworthy record of events centred around one historical person. The intellectual presentation of those events and the interpretation placed upon them by the immediate followers of Jesus are contained in the New Testament records and the historic Creeds. Behind all these lies the Tradition of which these are the literary expression. The antithesis between the Bible and the Tradition is a false one, inasmuch as the Bible itself is never divorced from the living Church which gave it birth and safeguarded it. The New Testament which

completes and in a sense fulfils the Old Testament is a Church Book embodying in unsystematic and almost fragmentary form, the substance of the authoritative tradition once for all delivered to the saints. The Divine Revelation was all through historically mediated. God spoke in divers manners and through diverse media. Revelation is thus primarily and essentially personal. It is the story of a Personal God revealing Himself to persons. That story finds a literary embodiment in the Bible and the New Testament and is thus in a sense the crystallization in documentary form of a supernatural Revelation.

History witnesses thus to the existence of a body of *credenda* ultimately divinely derived and humanly meditated, finding embodiment in a Tradition or Faith behind the New Testament literary records of it and the credal presentations of it. Its interpretation and its expression in Creeds and dogmatic formularies have been due to the passing exigencies of changing historical situations. The liturgical worship of the Church, moreover, through the ages has been at once a witness to its authenticity and a test of its continual vitality. This Tradition at the bar of history has no mean record. It has served our forefathers well. Can we hand it on to our children? It has stood the test of time. Can it still survive in our modern world and dare we, with any confidence, predict for it a future?

We need not at this stage seek to define its content too precisely nor discuss theories concerning its origin. We are simply concerned with its existence. There is to-day in what we have agreed to sum up under the

designation of dogma, some nucleus or common element or core or essence of Christianity which has persisted from the first and of the truth of which the dogma is the intellectual presentation. Does it need reconstruction and if so, why? Can we represent to-day this Faith behind the Creeds in a form intelligible to our modern world?

The need of representation is obvious when we reflect that a Divine revelation must be historically mediated. The human element in all revelation through inspiration necessitates a continuous process of interpretation in a world of growing knowledge and advancing discovery in every department of human life and thought. There never has been an age which did not need an intellectual interpretation of Christianity in terms of its own thought-forms, and in the face of its own intellectual and spiritual problems. It is not surprising therefore that to-day from many quarters arises a demand for some new definition of Christianity to meet the difficulties created by the findings of scientific research and philosophical speculation. The position, however, to-day is regarded as in many respects quite without parallel. The demand for restatement, if not radical alteration, of the truth of Christianity is pressing. It arises more particularly from the facts (*a*) of the advances in modern science in all its branches, (*b*) the consequent radical alteration in our world view and, (*c*) the results of the application of the historical method in a critical investigation of the literary origins of our Christian Faith.

This last raises the more fundamental question—Have we really grasped what Christianity was in its

origin? Is Christianity to-day what its Founder meant it to be and what it was in its origin? Is it possible to get behind the Christ of dogma to the Jesus of history? May we not retrace our steps and find a purer form of Christianity nearer to its source? Will not such a form commend itself to our modern thought in a way that Christianity to-day fails to do? May not the whole post-Apostolic development of dogma prove in the light of historical investigation to have been a vast mistake? Has not the historical method when applied to the Bible documents made it now possible for us, as never before, to discern between kernel and husk, between form and content, between the essence of Christianity and much which has been foisted upon the primitive faith in the course of centuries? Would not a reconstructed Christianity to-day in the light of all this give us a religion in which much hitherto regarded as fundamental would be seen to be secondary, much enshrined in the historic creeds seen to be incidental and legendary? May we rescue Christianity from the grave-clothes in which it has become more and more enveloped in the course of its long life through the ages and thus set it free with a new lease of life to do its work in our modern world? Is not a new and simpler form of it possible, stripped of those features which constitute a stumbling-block to the modern mind? Was it really in its original form bound up with the miraculous? May we not strip it to-day of those superstitious elements and those supernatural presuppositions which have undoubtedly played so prominent a part in its history but which need not be regarded as fundamental elements in a

saner and more intelligent reconstruction of its true meaning ?

Clearly our first question is to decide *what was Christianity ?* If the answer to this question is the discovery of a more primitive type of "Christianity not mysterious," then we can solve our problem of reconstruction quite simply. We shall not need to reconstruct dogma because there will be no dogma left to reconstruct. All we shall need to do is to jettison the dogmatic construction of the past and substitute in its place the original first version of Christianity, fresh from the lips of its Founder. If, on the other hand, the result of our enquiry shows us that the first version was indissolubly and irrevocably bound up with the supernatural, then we shall be forced to say that any reconstruction of dogma or any restatement of Christianity which claims continuity with the past must contain a miraculous element and a supernatural background as its setting. And if this be so, can it be reconstructed or restated in terms of modern thought ? The final antithesis may well prove to be this—the utter incompatibility of the miraculous with modern thought and thus the utter impossibility of a representation of Christianity. In this case either Christianity must be jettisoned or modern thought must change and we shall have to choose between these two alternatives. Let us then clear the ground sufficiently to enable us to define the issue. This we can only do by asking "What *was* Christianity ?"

Has the religion that Jesus taught become in the course of its history so radically transformed as to differ from its Founder to the extent of becoming a

religion *about* Him, rather than His religion? There are those who would have us believe that His religion was in its essence a revelation of the Fatherhood of God; that He summed up and presented in matchless form the finest fruits of the pre-Christian prophetic teaching of the Old Testament, and that the key to the meaning of Christianity is to be found in the Sermon on the Mount and the ethical teaching, of which that Sermon may be taken to be a typical summary. He was the culmination of a long line of Hebrew prophets, and the religious genius *par excellence*. As the mightiest spiritual force of the ancient world, He came to know God as Father in an intensity of spiritual apprehension never before achieved by any human being, and to-day still unparalleled and certainly not surpassed in all the long history of man's efforts after communion with the Unseen. The essence of His message to His own generation was this revelation of the reality of God as Father, and both by His teaching about God, and still more by His practice of the Presence of God, He persuaded men to try the experiment of following in His steps, and so with Him they came, and ever since have come, to share in His experience, and to know with Him and through Him the one God and Father of us all. If He could be cross-examined to-day in the light of the subsequent development of what is before the world now as the Christian Faith, He Himself, it is assumed, would be the first to tell us that a profound mistake has been made. He never meant men to direct their worship to His Person. He pointed them beyond Himself to God. He would ask us to abandon absolutely any

worship of Himself, and return with Him to "primitive" Christianity, with its pure ethical ideal, and its summons to all men to worship the one true God. "I am a man," He would say, "bone of your bone; flesh of your flesh. I range myself with you all in our common quest after communion with God. I have in myself experienced it to a degree far transcending your efforts, and I am here to help you to share in my joy. Cease then to centre your thoughts and affections in me. I am but the Way. I point you beyond myself to Him who is revealed through me to you. Let us cease once for all to talk of worshipping Me. Worship God with me. Let us pray. '*Our* Father, which art in Heaven.'"

According to this line of thought, the whole Christological controversy, with its culmination in the Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian formula, has been a vast mistake. The Church set out to teach an ethical message derived from its Founder, and ended by worshipping His Person. It began with a belief in Him as the promised Jewish Messiah, and ended by endowing Him with the attributes of deity. What was the cause of this startling perversion? The suggesion is that it was caused by the contact of the simple Jewish Christian teaching with the Gentile world of thought. The Hellenization of Christianity involved the application to the "Jesus of history" of concepts derived from mystery religions and cults. Hence the growth of a second edition of Christianity in which Jesus is no longer a simple ethical teacher or an Apocalyptic figure, but an Incarnate God.

Here, then, we have a clear issue between two rival

religions, the religion of Jesus the worshipper, and the religion that worships Jesus. The one holds Jesus to be in the ultimate analysis man raised to fellowship with God; the other holds Jesus to be God the Son incarnate. "Jesus the worshipper" is our guide to faith in God; "Jesus worshipped" is the object of our faith, and through Him, as the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, we have access to God our Father. The one regards Jesus as the product of an evolutionary process; the other holds Him to have been the Incarnation in this world of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. The one religion would hold that God was in Christ as in no other—the maximum of the Divine Immanence *in a person's* life; the other religion would speak of the Incarnation of God the Son *in a personal* life. The one accounts for Jesus Christ as a man who in some sense came to have the value of God for us; the other holds Him to be the God Man—eternally Divine and becoming human. The Church believes in One who was God and became Man; not in one who was Man and must in some sense be called God as having the value of the Divine in us and for us.

It is important that the issue should in any case be made clear if the difference between Christianity and its substitutes is to be preserved from a confusion which is constantly arising when terms strictly applicable only to Catholic Christology are applied to a Jesus who is regarded as a man in whom God dwelt. The attempt has been made to reduce Christianity to a series of ethical truths discoverable by man's natural reason, and to see in Jesus the finest flowering of man's

evolution in the ethical and spiritual quest. Hence "Christianity—not mysterious" is Christianity shorn of its supernaturalism, purged from its Apocalyptic adornment of miracles, prophecy, and the catastrophic intervention of a transcendent Deity. Jesus Himself is to be construed in terms not of a supernatural Being descending from a supra-mundane sphere into this world, and intervening in what is a world-process advancing on evolutionary lines by stages, gradations, and ordered steps towards a final goal—rather is He Himself a natural product of this evolutionary process, a flowering of a creative evolutionary movement. He "emerges," and whilst He is not wholly accounted for in terms of what led up to His appearance, yet there is no need to postulate the Incarnation from a super-celestial sphere to account for His appearance in the world of time and space. He arises out of the bosom of the later Jewish and Hellenistic worlds, and He is the bearer of an ethical message which itself is the highest product of a whole previous developing ethic in the hands of His predecessors, the Old Testament prophets and Greek seers. This interpretation of the meaning of Christianity seeks to avoid the stumbling-block to modern thought contained in the suggestion that it is bound up irrevocably with belief in certain miraculous events which are said to have ushered in the coming of Jesus into the world; to have been, moreover, a necessary accompaniment of all that He was and did whilst here on the earth, and to have marked His departure. If this be so, then He is not a product of an evolutionary process; He cannot be accounted for as in line with and emerging out of an

unending stream of sinful human beings, but is rather a new Creation, a Second Adam, supernaturally born from above, and incarnate on a mission from the sphere of the Eternal for us men and for our salvation. Hence far from evolution producing Him, He is prior to and Lord over the evolutionary process. Far from His being a product of history, He is History's Lord; history must be interpreted by His Person rather than He be interpreted by it. There is thus a clear difference between a view which regards Him as being the climax of the Divine Immanence in a person's life, and the view which holds Him to have been God the Son Incarnate in a personal life. If Jesus is an evolutionary figure, a theory of Divine Immanence will account for Him. If He is an any sense Transcendent, He must first be above and ultimately independent of the evolutionary process as the sole condition of His appearance in it at a point in time. It is tempting to interpret Him purely in human terms, to their maximum meaning, since our modern world view which is essentially governed by the evolution concept can then find an honoured place for Jesus in its thought.

In Christian teaching, however, the Logos is held to have been the agent in creation, one with God before all time. He who is thus held to have been the Producer of the evolutionary process can never have been Himself merely a product of it. If, therefore, He is what the Church believes Him to have been, the Incarnate Son of God, then He transcends all our categories of thought, and leaves us no alternative save to worship and adore. Christianity as a supernatural religion cannot be reduced to anything lower

and more intelligible to our finite understanding without having to suffer such violent transformation as to leave it a different thing in all essentials to what it really is.

Whilst a study of, for example, Dr. Scott's survey in his work on *The First Age of Christianity* of the "assured results" of modern Biblical scholarship on this momentous period in Christian history leaves it still very doubtful if the orthodox belief in the Person of Christ can be substantiated in the light of a study of the results of critical investigations, there are none the less one or two directions in which further thought and study have clearly modified positions at one time fairly widely accepted by scholars. For example, there seems to be a growing disinclination amongst advanced critics to claim St. Paul as the second founder of Christianity, and to state the issue in so bald a way as was done half a century ago in the query, Jesus or Paul? We are now assured that whilst the Apostle did not create the new beliefs, he defined and interpreted them with matchless insight. The charge that St. Paul distorted the simple Gospel, and that hence our task is to get back behind Catholic Christianity as elaborated by the Hellenization movement to the teaching of Jesus, is now modified by the recognition that in reality the Apostle was the great conservative force in early Christianity, and that we owe it to his work that the Hellenizing process did not advance to such extremes as to destroy everything that was distinctively Christian in the new religion, as was in fact done in the Gnostic schools. Justice is now done to the fairly obvious fact that St. Paul was the bond-servant of his Master, and

would have repudiated with emphasis the suggestion that in any intelligent sense he was preaching a religion out of harmony with the mind of Jesus. This is fully and frankly recognized by Dr. Scott. "The process of Hellenizing the Gospel," he says, "has often been regarded as wholly due to Paul. He has been accused of wilfully distorting the message as Jesus had taught it, with the result that all the centuries since have missed the true meaning of Christianity. But it is well to remember that the Hellenizing process was inevitable. It had begun before Paul. It was advanced, during his lifetime, by many teachers who worked quite independently of him. There can be little doubt that a great deal of what we call Paulinism was not Pauline but Hellenistic. Paul is the one Apostle whose writings have come down to us, and he therefore receives the sole blame or credit for everything he taught. But he was only one of many missionaries who all drew, as he did, on those Hellenistic ideas which were in the very atmosphere of the time. Of these missionaries, however, he was by far the greatest, and was peculiarly fitted for his task of interpreting Christianity to the Gentiles."

Again, we have a clear recognition that the origin of the Pauline theology is to be sought not in his environment, whether Jewish or Gentile, but in his own religious experience. This really brings us to a crucial point. Schweitzer has, no doubt, over-emphasized the place of Apocalyptic in the life and teaching both of St. Paul and of his Master. The attempt to explain Jesus wholly in terms of Apocalyptic by the Eschatologists has not won any very wide acceptance. The more

recent endeavours of some scholars—e.g., Loisy and Reitzenstein, to account for Catholic Christianity as heavily indebted to the world of thought which finds expression in the Hermetic literature and in the mystery religions has not commended itself to the more cautious students of the origins of Christianity. Whatever may prove to be the extent of its indebtedness both to Jewish and Gentile modes of thought, what we have to start with in Christianity is a mighty creative Personality appearing at a certain period in the history of the world, and doing a work both during His earthly life and after His death of such a character as to force men to ransack the categories of thought both inside and outside the narrow confines of Palestinian Judaism in their desperate effort to find concepts adequate to express the values which they had come through personal experience to attach to His Person and Work.

We may freely admit, if critical study forces us to do so, that there were elements in the Christian message —and these among the most vital—which could never have come to their own within the narrow confines of Jewish tradition. There are scholars who are convinced that Palestinian and Alexandrian Judaism are sufficient to account for the categories of thought used by the first interpreters of Jesus and His work. This may or may not be the case. The work of Dr. Rendel Harris and Dr. Burney on the problem of the Johannine Prologue and the origin of the Logos-concept has still to be carefully studied before we hastily assume that the author of the Fourth Gospel went to a "foreign" source for this far-reaching and, in one sense, revolutionary translation of the meaning of Jesus in terms of

incarnation. Be this, however, as it may, the point clearly to settle is whether the Jesus to whom these lofty ideas came to be attached *really in Himself possessed these values*, or whether the attachment of these values to His Person make Him, for subsequent Christian thought, what He has undoubtedly become but was not, nor wished Himself to be taken to be. Put more simply, the problem is whether He was a man to whom Deity came to be ascribed as the result of a process of speculative thought following upon the events of His life and the influence He exerted upon men after His Death, or whether He was indeed God the Son Incarnate, and, this being so, those who had commerce with Him spoiled two worlds in their endeavour to do justice to their discovery of the meaning of His Person, and to express that meaning in terms of the thought of their day? In this latter case it does not matter in the least whether the Jewish Messiah-concept proved inadequate to do justice to His Person, and so drove St. Paul and other thinkers to employ richer concepts—Logos, Kurios, Spirit, and a host of kindred thoughts—to express the significance of His Person and Work in the world. Their Christology and Soteriology was not *created* by the terms they employed. They employed these terms because on other grounds they had grasped the secret of their Master, and were imperatively urged to tell others the glorious news.

Again, we have always to remember that whilst Jesus Himself sought in Palestinian Judaism moulds into which He poured His thought and expressed the purpose of His coming, His use of these moulds was

of such a character as to transform them. Hence the Messiah-concept of Jewish Apocalyptic in His hands underwent such a transformation as to become in His thought the vehicle for the expression of what in His Person was the organic union of the two great Old Testament ideal Figures of the suffering Servant and the ideal King. These two figures clearly discernible in the long history of a progressive revelation of God to His own peculiar people, the Jews, are nowhere found combined in any pre-Christian Messianic or Prophetic person. Their organic union is first met with in the Messianic consciousness of Jesus. And it is this combination in His own consciousness of Himself in relation to God and God's purpose through Him for the world that enriches the concept of Messiahship in the thought of Jesus to a degree so startling as to make it in His person something unique. He came not to destroy but to fulfil, and whether in the sphere of Apocalyptic or the sphere of Ethics, His fulfilment *transmuted* both. If, then, this were the case with Him and His use of current moulds, how much more would it be when His followers came to try, and express *Him* in the same terms. He overflowed the world of Jewish thought, and if His interpreters borrowed terms from Gentile sources to do justice to His Person, they were only the pioneers of a long line of successors who in every age have taken the best thought of their day and generation in the effort to harness it to the service of Christology. No age has yet fully understood or expressed His full significance.

We conclude, then, that Christianity is not a construction which owes its origin to a minimum of historical

facts to which a maximum of theoretical and highly speculative ideas have become erroneously attached so as to transform the Jesus of Nazareth into the Incarnate Son of God. On the contrary, we start with the stupendous fact and its values, the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection not as ideas mistakenly attached to certain happenings in Palestine in the first century, but as historic events the only interpretation of which is conveyed by these terms. The facts create the interpretation. The facts are indissolubly one with the values the Church attaches to them. Let the facts once be conclusively disproved and their values cannot survive. Either He rose again from the dead and now liveth for evermore, or He did not. The Church believed that His tomb was empty, and from this *deduced* the Easter Message. It was not that the Easter Message and the Resurrection idea became erroneously attached to a supposed illustration of this idea in the case of an historical person who was believed to have survived a bodily death. On the contrary, the events which took place in the first age of Christianity, were of such a nature as to force men to conclude that no explanation of them short of the beliefs about them enshrined in the Apostles' Creed could do adequate justice to them. The historic facts created the Creed. The thought-forms employed in the creation of the Creed were necessarily borrowed. The forms, however, did not confer upon the facts a fictitious value. Nor has modern critical investigation into Christian origins yet succeeded in undermining the foundation-facts upon which the Christian Creed is based. The appeal of Christianity is still, and

must always be, an appeal to history. This cannot be helped. There must always, therefore, be an element of doubt and query. Did these things really happen? There must always be room for critical investigation, and a right employment of the historical method must always be welcomed. The last hundred years have witnessed the rise and decay of many theories in the effort to explain or explain away the facts. What we have to remember all through the investigation of the historicity or otherwise of these alleged facts is that the Church was founded upon a belief in the Resurrection of Christ, and its subsequent history is bound up with its continuous witness to His Presence as a Living and Life-giving Saviour imparting Himself to His Body and living anew in its members. The Christian experience of God in Christ Jesus is as much a fact of history as is any fact enshrined in the womb of time. St. Paul and the Early Church deduced the implications of Christ's person from His earthly life and their experience of His Risen Life in their midst.

Investigation of the historicity of Christianity cannot be confined to an inquiry concerning events of His earthly life without any reference to the phenomenon of the Christian Church which arose as the result of that life, and claims still to live in the power of His endless life.

The life of Jesus of Nazareth cannot be divorced from the Life of the Christ of the Creeds, as this is witnessed to by Christian experience.

Christian experience is not the creation of borrowed elements derived from ideas alien to primitive Christianity, and foisted upon the simple creed of Jesus the

worshipper so as to create after His Death a new religion unknown to the first age of Christian believers, and centred in a belief in His Person which the first age of Christianity did not share.

Christ, in fact, created the Church before the Church set about its task of formulating its Christology. The Risen Christ imparted Himself to a community of worshippers on the Day of Pentecost, and they then preached Him to an unbelieving world in the power of His Spirit. The historic Christ is the Incarnate Son of God and the Work the Holy Spirit subsequently performed is the direct issue of the Incarnation. Whatever the borrowing from Jewish and Gentile sources historic investigation of the origins of Christianity may bring to light, we have belief in the Risen Lord first as the explanation and the cause of this borrowing. The belief caused the borrowing. The borrowing did not create the belief. The utmost scholars may hope to prove is the aid afforded to the Church in the elucidation of its belief and the expression of it by this process of continuous borrowing from both the Jewish and Gentile world of categories in which Christian belief and Christian experience sought to clothe themselves. The garments are borrowed to clothe a Figure they could never have created.

In answer then to our question—What was Christianity? history presents us with the record of certain happenings so stupendous in their results as to force us to accept as their explanation nothing less than the Dogma of the God-Man. Christianity must stand or fall ultimately by its adherence to or rejection of this concept of the Incarnation. And it carries with

it certain implications for philosophy which cannot be avoided. It involves quite definite restrictions to our freedom of speculation concerning the nature of ultimate Reality. If we are Christians we are committed in our thought to some form of Dualism. We are not free to accept either an absolute Monism, or a thoroughgoing Pluralism as our solution of the Cosmic problem. I have indicated in my book under that title what in my opinion are some of the essential *Postulates of a Christian Philosophy* to which we are committed by our Christian data. Though in its origin Christianity was not a philosophy of religion, it nevertheless has a quite definite contribution to make to the philosophy of religion ; though itself not a philosophy, it nevertheless needs a distinctive philosophy of its own to do it justice. History records the attempts of many thinkers to express its meaning in terms of philosophical systems constructed in the first instance apart from any particular reference to itself. An examination of these efforts does not hold out much encouragement for yet another attempt to be assayed in terms of any modern philosophical system. Yet the task awaits us and we cannot escape the obligation. A final formulation of Christian doctrine must ever elude us in a world of growing knowledge. We may expect to achieve a temporarily satisfying intellectual formulation of the essential content of our Christian belief but we can claim for it no finality. We can only hope for it a term of years sufficiently lengthy to tide us over the period before some new and startling advance in scientific research or some bold and far-stretching philosophical speculation renders imperative a fresh effort on the

part of Christian thinkers either to co-ordinate it with revealed truth or to demonstrate its incompatibility with the received tradition.

The Christian Church does not claim finality for any intellectual formulation of its faith. It claims finality for the Faith itself. The content of the Faith remains constant amidst all the changes which take place in its intellectual expression. There is something in Christianity which ultimately escapes analysis and eludes definition. Just as experience is always greater than its psychological or intellectual formulation and we are greater than we either know or can express, so our Christian Faith must always elude our efforts adequately to express it in the thought-forms of our age. Moreover our dogmas just because they are intellectual formulations have always a symbolical element. We must thus ever be on our guard lest we so identify the dogmatic expression of our belief with the datum as to lose its richness of content by a too fanatical adherence to its form. The Faith lying behind both the New Testament records and the credal expression of it, remains the same. It is something "given." It is supernatural in origin. Its form is human: its content divine. The form is temporary, transient, changeable: the content is eternal, permanent, changeless. The dualism inherent in the Christian revelation lies just here. The Incarnation is the Supernatural inserting itself into the Natural; eternity expressed in the time series: Being in some sense becoming; God made man; the Word made flesh. Clearly then, any intellectual formulation of its content must always be symbolical and its expression always

within the limits of *human* thought. We must not be surprised if we find that human thinking fails in its effort to apprehend the full significance of a Divine Revelation. The task set to the human by the gift of the "Given" is a never-ending effort at appreciation of the greatness of its meaning and significance for human life and thought. We must beware of assuming that any intellectual formulation of the Given in terms of human thought can reach such finality as to dispense us from the task of further thinking about it or further improvement in the formulæ by which we seek to express it.

Our problem in the reconstruction of dogma thus begins to be more clearly defined and the greatness and difficulty of our task more fully appreciated. If, in loyalty to history, we attempt to carry over into our modern world the supernatural revelation historically mediated by the Christian religion and embodied in the ancient dogmatic formulation, our task becomes nothing less than the vindication of Revelation in the light of modern thought. We shall be forced ultimately to challenge the modern world with a philosophy of revelation and confont it afresh with a religion of redemption. The implications of such a religion of redemption and the presuppositions of any revelation bring us immediately into open conflict with the findings of human thought and research in science in its varied branches, and in much current philosophical speculation which owes its origin and stimulus to the world-view which scientific investigations open out before us.

Put more explicitly, our questions are such as these :

Can a religion expressed in terms of an out-of-date Mosaic cosmology and governed by static conceptions of Deity, meet the demands of a world vastly enlarged by post-Copernican astronomy and dominated by a new view of reality as dynamic ? Can a religion which in some degree at least is bound up with the Eschatological and catastrophic view of history be ultimately reconciled with the evolutionary interpretation of the world and human life ? Is there any room for the revelation of a supra-mundane Being and the Incarnation of Transcendent Deity in a world which we believe to be self-explanatory and wholly accountable for in categories of thought which do not need supplementing by reference to any super-celestial sphere ? Is there any place for the Incarnation in an evolutionary process ? And further, if a place must be found for any such event, must it not be plainly conceived of as in the nature of an ideal towards which history is moving, an end or goal which awaits the human race in its processes of becoming ? Can we equate the idea of an Incarnation with an event in the historical process ? A more fundamental question still is whether we can superimpose upon a growing and developing world any such static idea of an " end " or " goal " or " finality " such as is suggested in the Christian conception of the world and final destiny. Does Christianity really give us the Key to the meaning of the world and human life and may we still regard events in time as in some sense providentially ordered as part of a Divine Plan conceived by a Transcendent Divine Being which He is working out in the course of history ? Is such a philosophy of history any longer tenable in the light

of what science can tell us concerning the evolution of the world and human life and its probable end ? We speak to-day somewhat optimistically of the reconciliation of Science and Religion. Have we any real justification for the assumption that Christian Dogma is in any essential point compatible with our modern scientific knowledge and the conclusions which are being drawn from this ?

An answer to these questions would carry us far into current Christian Apologetics and lead to an examination of many tentative efforts after reconciliation between Science and Religion and more specifically between modern philosophical speculation and the presuppositions of Christianity conceived of as a body of propositions concerning God, Man and Salvation.

Within the limits of our space all we can hope to do is to glance at one or two of the more crucial issues presented for faith by our modern situation in the world of science and philosophy and to indicate in outline the kind of modern Apologetic which we should be inclined to offer in an effort after the reconstruction of Dogma in terms of modern thought.

There is a widespread feeling that the Church in the modern world ought most certainly to cease from repeating, especially in public worship, the ancient creeds. These are regarded as useless heirlooms and cumbersome relics of ancient Christianity which certainly must be restated, since we have no right to force upon the Church of the twentieth century the philosophy and terminology of the fourth. Our modern astronomy rules out a spatio-temporal "heaven," above the bright blue sky, and our modern minds cannot find intellectual

satisfaction in the thought of God enthroned above the earth at some definite point in space. We all recognize that the language of the ancient creed is hopelessly antiquated. It is too often assumed, however, that with our abandonment of the conception of the earth as flat and the planets revolving around it and with the final repudiation of a geocentric and anthropocentric universe, must go also the whole dogmatic construction of an Incarnation, Resurrection, Ascension and Second Advent. All these words are plainly symbolical and cannot be taken literally. The substitution of a post-Copernican for a Ptolemaic theory of the universe demands another set of phrases. We should admit, at once, the need. We deny, however, that the need for new thought-forms and the plain inadequacy of those hitherto employed in our Creeds carries with it any necessity of abandoning the great underlying truths those thought-forms were meant to clothe. The picture language of the historic creeds is legitimate so long as we recognize it as an attempt to express in the thought-forms of our finite and limited intelligence, realities which, because spiritual, are *ex hypothesi* incapable of adequate expression in terms of time and space. Heaven is not in space nor is Hell in time. We do not, however, get rid of the reality of either by ceasing to use these terms and trying to find others to take their place.

A demand, moreover, for a Creed which shall be free from ancient and presumably outworn metaphysical assumptions is legitimate, if by it we mean a readiness to express our belief in terms of a more modern philosophical system which can speak to our

case to-day in a way in which, say, Platonism or Aristotelianism, fails to do. What we are concerned, however, to repudiate is the suggestion that our dogmatic beliefs do not necessarily involve any metaphysical assumptions and that a theology without metaphysics is possible. Our belief in the Person of Christ and His redemptive purpose for human life is such that its acceptance commits us to some quite definite positions as regards those ultimate problems with which metaphysics is concerned.

Again, objection is urged against the historic creeds because of the alleged doubtful historicity of some of their statements. There is, so we gather, no single clause of our Apostles' Creed which means the same to us to-day as it meant to those who first drew up its clauses. Clearly then some liberty of interpretation is a legitimate claim and it has been made and exercised all through the ages. We must be quite prepared to re-interpret the Faith behind the creeds in terms of any new truth which has rewarded our search or awaits yet our discovery in days to come. Seeing that the Faith once for all delivered claims to be something "Given" by One Who Himself is the Truth, no fresh discovery of truth in man's never-ending quest after it can contradict the truth revealed in the Person of Christ.

The Church claims to be in possession of truth ultimately Divinely derived and meant to be expressed in every generation in terms of what this world's wisdom finds intelligible. We are free to use the thought-forms of any age or of all the ages, if so be that by this means, we may succeed in some measure in

bringing home to the minds and hearts of men the message and the revelation the Church has received and is commissioned to proclaim.

The facts which in every age stand in need of interpretation and demand authoritative elucidation, are primarily and essentially in origin supernatural facts, historically mediated. They are not primarily a set of ideas or opinions whencesoever derived, whether from above or discoverable by man's reason. We cannot tear Christianity from its historical setting. The creeds embody certain historical statements which the Church believes to be true. There must always, therefore, be room for doubt and always the possibility of dispute as to the credibility or otherwise of the ancient narratives which contain the records of Christian origins. The historicity of Christianity for ever prevents its exemption from attack on the question of the accuracy or otherwise of the alleged happenings and the credibility of the documents which record them. The facts are always there to be re-interpreted. The interpretation put upon them by the Church all through the ages is such as to have made historical Christianity indissolubly bound up with a belief in the miraculous. The historic creeds involve this belief. If we repeat them to-day, we commit ourselves to that belief.

A re-interpretation of Christianity in terms of modern thought may change every phrase in the ancient creeds and modernize the language to any extent desirable. What it cannot do, if it is a genuine re-interpretation and not a spurious substitute for the old, is to leave out the miraculous element or evacuate that of any

meaning. "Christianity not mysterious" is a new religion. It is not a genuine substitute for the old. A reconstruction of dogma may welcome any re-interpretation of the old in terms of the new: it must repudiate, however, a denial of the literal truth of the historical facts which gave birth to the Christian faith and are enshrined in its creed.

Again, we have always to bear in mind that religious dogmas, just because they are at once supernatural truths historically mediated, can never be either conclusively demonstrated or decisively disproved by the methods of scientific investigation and historical criticism.

We may here avail ourselves of a distinction to which attention has frequently been directed and which enables us to appreciate the precise contribution which both science and history have to make and the essential limitations within which they both must move in any effort to evaluate Christian dogmas. There is a clear distinction between historical judgments and dogmatic judgments. I avail myself of some useful and lucid paragraphs from Dr. Sparrow Simpson's well-known volume on the *Resurrection and Modern Thought*. He reminds us that a historical judgment is a decision as to occurrences, after critical investigation, on data strictly within the limits of the natural. That, however, which is inexplicable by natural laws can be registered by the historian as a human belief but not as an objective occurrence. There is, in our modern view, a judgment of another kind. It also is concerned with facts, but it brings to bear upon them not only the intellectual faculties, but also the moral and emotional:

indeed the entire personality. This may be called a dogmatic judgment, a judgment on the value of the asserted fact for life.

Dr. Sparrow Simpson goes on to show that dogmatic judgments are founded on religious presuppositions: they do not rest on purely historic evidence, as confined within the limits of the merely natural. They are, to some extent, ventures of faith. They are largely concerned with a sphere outside the purely human. Applying this distinction between critical and dogmatic judgments to the articles of the Christian creed, some are seen to be purely historical: some purely dogmatic and some, again, mixed. That Jesus lived and was crucified under Pontius Pilate is a fact of history; that He sitteth at the right hand of God is a statement quite incapable of verification by any critical methods of ordinary historical investigation and is purely dogmatic. The third day He rose again from the dead is a mixed judgment partly historical, partly dogmatic. That He died is historical: that He was buried is historical. That the grave was empty is a question purely within the limits of the historical. That the Galileans believed that they had seen Him after He was risen, is a psychological experience, within the limits of the historical. But the objective reality of His Resurrection: this transcends the sphere of history. It is a dogmatic judgment, a venture of faith. It is impossible to place the Resurrection on the same level as mere ordinary events of history. It was not an event in the natural order at all. To begin with, it was witnessed by no human eye. The subsequent witness to the Appearances was confined to the circle of disciple-

ship. He never reappeared within the arena of the common world. That the disciples passed through a stupendous change is within the historic sphere. But the cause of it lies outside that sphere and refuses to be brought within the circle of scientific critical investigation. Here the mere historian is baffled. From the purely critical standpoint history is confined within the limits of birth and death. It naturally stands helpless before a career for which is claimed pre-existence and Resurrection. Where the historic judgment reaches its limit, the dogmatic judgment is left to decide.

The modern mind will not assent to the proposition that the Resurrection of Jesus is as certain as any other historical fact. Belief in it is a religious assent, and not a mere historic assent. Belief in it must ultimately depend on a judgment of its worth. And that again will depend on our entire interpretation of life. It is inseparable from religious presuppositions.

I have followed Dr. Sparrow Simpson closely in what we shall all agree is a most illuminating treatment of the precise distinctions which must be drawn between these two kinds of judgment in their application to our problem of Christian dogmas. It enables us to appreciate the fact that history and science cannot pronounce upon ultimate problems, nor on the other hand can the dogmatic theologian give conclusive scientific proof of his intellectual presentations of the Christian Faith. The ultimate test of religious dogma will be its meaning for life. The demand for a re-interpretation of Christianity in terms of modern thought is perfectly legitimate and in entire accord with our contention

that whilst the Faith behind its credal forms remains unchanged, its intellectual expression must vary from age to age.

A further difficulty, however, suggests itself in the light of our present modern situation. And it is this. In terms of what system of "modern thought" shall we endeavour to express our Christianity? Is there any one system of modern philosophy which has gained so widespread an adherence on the part of so large a number of thoughtful people as to justify our selecting it in preference to all other rivals as *the* philosophy of the twentieth century and therefore *the* philosophy in terms of which we must express ourselves to-day and present our faith for acceptance?

The facts of the present situation are that so far from there being any modern philosophy within measurable distance of gaining any general adherence, we are on the contrary living in a state of chaos in the clash of philosophical speculations the like of which has hardly before been paralleled in the long history of man's quest after ultimate Truth.

However eager the Church may be to speak to men in their own language, the present Babel in the philosophical world makes such a task extremely difficult and hazardous. Our scientific dogmas are in the melting-pot and our historical judgments are continually being recanvassed.

Professor Sorley has drawn the attention of thoughtful men to the fact that restatement in terms of modern thought to-day is hindered not only by the fact that philosophical opinion is in a chaos, but also because the results of historical and Biblical study are as yet

insufficiently determinate for a new statement of doctrine as full as the ancient formularies. No statements, he reminds us, can be wholly free from the intellectual influences of their day. Thus Platonism, and after that Aristotelianism gave colour to Christian doctrine. But now suppose that the Church had embarked upon the drawing up of a new formula, say, some twenty or thirty years ago. What intellectual influence would have coloured, or shall we say, discoloured, it? "It is safe to say (writes Professor Sorley) that it would been an amalgam of the ideas of Hegel and Darwin. Fortunately, that danger has been averted, and the Christian is not required to believe in Hegel or in Darwin. But (he adds) should Plato or Aristotle have any greater authority over his belief?"

We draw attention to Professor Sorley's words as a wholesome reminder of the dangers attendant upon attempted reconstructions and restatements of belief and proposed rewording of Credal forms in an age of intellectual unrest and amidst the inevitable upheaval which new discoveries and advancing knowledge in all departments of thought bring with them. The Church can afford to wait quietly, assured that the Deposit of Truth entrusted to her will yet be needed and prove of priceless worth to an age which at present rejects it with scorn, and drunk with the new wine of knowledge falsely so called, bids us in tones the more aggressive because the more inwardly uncertain, to repeat its shibboleths in place of our Creeds; its new formulæ in place of the tried and through many centuries well-sifted and accredited symbols of our faith.

Whilst, therefore, the time does not appear to be ripe for a re-formulation of the Christian Faith in a widely accepted modern philosophical system, there is certainly one modern philosophy in which the doctrine of the Incarnation as the Church conceives it can find no adequate place. *I refer to the modern philosophy of change.*

Do we need a new idea of God which is better able to meet our modern requirements than that supplied by the Christian conception ?

We are told that thought has so changed in all subjects in recent years that in fact history itself is providing such a new idea of God conceived not in static but in dynamic terms. The quest after the historical Jesus has resulted in the final abandonment of any real equation between the Jesus of history and the Christ-idea. We live in a world of becoming. Change is the keynote of all our conceptions of ultimate reality. The universe itself is developing and growing. There is no room, therefore, for such ancient ideas as that of a Creator-God Who is Himself in some sense "outside" the universe and transcendent above it in a celestial heaven. We cannot prove a beginning or absolute origin of the universe and we can no longer entertain the thought of any sharp division between the supernatural and the natural. There are not two orders of reality, a celestial and a terrestrial : heaven and earth. On the contrary we must find the Divine within the human or nowhere. Revelation must be equated with religious discovery. The idea of God must change with the changing times and our notion of the Trinity must be expressed if at all, in terms of

pure immanentism. The old ideas of Deity were formulated in a pre-scientific age and are the product of *a priori* reasoning. The new ideas of Deity are the direct inferences from empirical data and are based upon experience. We have not to postulate a Divine Revelation to account for them but they are strictly legitimate deductions from observation and discovery. The old arguments for the existence of God—the Ontological, Cosmological and Teleological, must be radically recast. The only God which can have any place in a growing and developing universe must be Himself a product of the process and not its Producer. We must quite definitely abandon the concept of Transcendence. The old ideas were formulated, moreover, in a state of society which was saturated with conceptions of autocracy and monarchy. Our modern democratic age can find no room for monarchical gods whether human or divine. Professor A. C. McGiffert has enumerated the conditions upon which alone the idea of God will be accepted in these days of growing democracy. We gather that the War did much to scrap both monarchies and monarchical gods. Such notions of God as " King of kings " and Ruler of rulers, we are told, were shaped under the influence of courts and thrones and for that reason are unacceptable in this day and age. The evolution of the social system thus combines with the demands of science in an effort to create a new idea of God who shall be more consonant with our modern needs than was the ancient God of Israel or the revised version of that idea in the teaching of Jesus. Thus E. G. Holmes in an Article in the *Hibbert Journal* (Vol. XXI, No. 2, January 1923,

p. 227, quoted in *God and Intelligence*, to which I am largely indebted in the preceding paragraphs), dealing with the Idea of Evolution and the Idea of God says: "Slowly but surely the idea of evolution is undermining the foundations of orthodox Christian theology. For a static conception of the Universe was the cement on which those foundations were laid; and as the idea of evolution makes headway and the static conception falls into disrepute, the foundations of the orthodox theology, which have long shown signs of instability, will become more and more unstable, and at last in the fulness of time, the whole structure will totter and fall. . . . The change from a static to a dynamic view of things, from the category of *esse* to the category of *fieri* is bound to have its effect. For the Creator of Being and the Source (and Soul) of Becoming, are, as concepts, at opposite poles of human thought."

In this eloquent passage Mr. Holmes confronts us with one of the ultimate issues facing us in any attempt at the reconstruction of Dogma in terms of modern thought.

Can Christianity come to terms with a philosophy which insists that we read reality not as Being but as Becoming and thus relates itself to the ancient dictum of Heraclitus πάντα ῥεῖ. Such a philosophy is in a strong position, seeing that it accords with the verdict of Science in recent research. Psychology, biology and now physics all speak in terms of becoming and bid us see reality not as a static changelessness but as a dynamic change. Movement, becoming, change, flux and hence relativity—with such

concepts derived from a strictly empirical approach to the study of the nature of ultimate reality, there seems to be little if any room left for our Absolutist systems of thought, still less for any *a priori* assumption of Transcendent Deity. The utmost that such a new view suggests is that we must find the One within the Many and in some sense as a product of a never-ending process. Truth itself is not static but dynamic; knowledge is a growing and expanding product. We have to cease from conceiving of a thinker and a thing thought and we are bidden to regard these two as arbitrary intellectual abstractions. The ultimate reality is the thinking. We must not conceive of static entities in a constant universe but only of events in a space-time continuum which itself is purely relative. Matter, life and mind are but stages in an "emergent" evolutionary process and if we are to think of God at all in such a system, it can only be as immanent activity in the world and human life and we are hard put to it to differentiate it as in any sense distinct and distinguishable from the human. It is at best a force or power not himself which in man and mankind makes for betterment—an immanent urge towards moral and spiritual values—what H. G. Wells has baptized in the name of the Undying Fire. If there be at work in the world and human life a Power not ourselves nor ultimately identical with the merely human, we are forbidden to look for its source in any sphere outside the Cosmos, if we cling to a philosophy of change and reject the concept of transcendence.

We thus reach the parting of the ways and must admit that Christianity cannot come to terms with

any philosophical system which is content to read Reality solely in terms of Becoming. Such a philosophy allows no room for the content of the Christian Revelation, least of all for that conception of God in relation to the world and human life which is indissolubly bound up with the Christian teaching and the dogma of the God-Man. There is no room for the Christian conception of the Incarnation in a rigidly immanentist philosophy.

Both transcendence and immanence are essential postulates in any Christian philosophy.

If we are determined to adhere to the dogma of the God-Man in any attempted reconstruction or representation of Christianity in terms of modern thought, it follows that our doctrine of the Incarnation commits us to some quite definite conclusions concerning God, Freedom and Immortality. The Kantian postulates of the Practical Reason are in their Christian setting integral parts of the whole dogmatic construction and a Christian philosophy finds itself committed to clearly defined positions in its efforts to do justice to the full implications of revealed religion on these questions.

On the whole problem of the relation of God to the world, the Christian revelation claims to throw an illumination so rich in its significance that its acceptance involves a complete philosophical reorientation in our thinking. Christology is in fact, as Dr. Luce has aptly put it, an attempt to solve the Cosmic problem in terms of personality, human and Divine. The Logos-Christology is the Christian contribution to the philosophical problem of Mediation. If the modern philosophy of change cannot entertain the concept of

Transcendence, Christian theology cannot do without it. Here we reach the parting of the ways. A reconstruction of Christian dogma must carry over into our modern world the principle of the Incarnation. If, in doing this, we fall short in our effort to conserve the full values involved in the stupendous fact of an historic incarnation, we must cease to speak of a reconstruction of the Christian creed and bend our energies to the formulation of a new religion which, whatever affinities it may claim to have with Christian thought, cannot be equated with historic Christianity nor can it claim any real continuity with it. Bound up with the concept of Transcendence is the whole question of a miraculous Christianity, and by this alone can justice be done to the distinctive character of the Incarnation and its real meaning in an historic teleology. Any doctrine of Mediation is beset with difficulties. The Christian contribution in the Logos-Christology still confronts our modern world as one of the most suggestive and illuminating efforts in our search for a synthesis between Transcendence and Immanence. Were the Logos-concept merely an idea of the speculative reason, our modern reconstruction might presumably jettison it in favour of some other idea more consonant with the philosophy of change. We, however, are committed to the historicity of our religion and to a belief that in identifying an historical event, the coming of Jesus into the world, with the fact of the Divine Incarnation of God the Son, the early Church made no vast mistake, but set its stamp of approval upon this as the true interpretation. With the truth of this the Christian Church must stand or fall.

In rejecting thus a philosophy of change or a purely immanentist philosophy as wholly inadequate to do justice to our Christian conception of God and His relation to the world and human life, we must indicate in briefest outline our view of the kind of synthesis between the concepts of Immanence and Transcendence which is needed if we are to build up a distinctive Christian philosophy in which alone, in our opinion, the full content of our Christian Faith can find adequate intellectual formulation.[1]

If the Problem of Philosophy in the rival systems of Monism and Pluralism is to find room for the Many in the One—if empirical data give us a pluralistic universe and pure thought seeks logical coherence in the concept of Reality as a Unit or an Absolute in which the all is embraced—Religion offers a *via media*. Religion is concerned to find room for the Many in the One, for the " eaches " in the " All " without destroying either the Sovereign Absoluteness and entire self-sufficingness of the One or the reality and permanence of the Many. This it attempts to achieve by means of the terms Transcendence and Immanence.

God in Christian Theism is Absolute, Sovereign; He is not dependent upon His Creation and is complete without it. He does not in this sense stand in need of us nor is His perfection achieved by means of us. He is not a growing God or a developing being. This is a vital point. Granted that He is Eternal Creator and would cease to be God did He cease to

[1] For a fuller treatment reference may be made to *Some Postulates of a Christian Philosophy*, where the main positions in such a Christian Philosophy are more adequately treated.

obey the law of His own Being and rest from Creation, this does not imply that the finite world we know had no beginning in time. He was Creator prior to our creation. He was independent and complete prior to the creation of finite spirits. The Absolute of speculative philosophy is a Whole in some sense made up of its parts and which has no meaning apart from the parts of which it is composed. It is an all-embracing Unity, but the Unity is not independent of or prior to the multiplicity; in fact it *is* the multiplicity viewed, *sub specie aeternitatis*. Applied to the God of religion, this is Pantheism; the Creator is confounded with the Creation, *is* the Creation viewed from the absolute rather than the relative point of view. The fact is that so long as we are content to allow our thought to move within the range suggested by "Whole" and "Parts" "One" and "Many," we are thinking in terms of an ontological relationship and there is no escape from the conclusion that the parts must be absorbed in the whole or the whole be identified with the parts.

Now theology rejects an ontological relationship in favour of an ethical. It deals in terms of personality. Affinity, kinship do not involve identity of Being.

Moreover, the Transcendence is secured by the thought that Perfect Personality, a Unity in Trinity and a Trinity in Unity, is all-inclusive in Itself. Its perfection lies outside of its relationship to finite persons, whilst at the same time it is the ground and source of their being and becoming. The doctrine of the Trinity thus enriches the concept of the One and reveals it as Personal through and through.

True that theology is thus left with the problem of

Freedom in the relationship between the finite and the Infinite. It has still to solve the compatibility of the Absolute Sovereignty of the One with the relative freedom of the Many. It remains, true, however, to empirical experience in refusing to deny this freedom and dismiss it as an illusion in the interests of the consistency of the philosophical concept of the Absolute.

Pluralism secures the freedom of the Many at the expense of abandoning the Absolute. Monism secures the Absolute at the expense of a denial of freedom to the Many. Christian Theism seeks a way out by means of other, and, as we think, richer concepts. It lifts the whole problem into the realm of ethical and spiritual relationships, Personality, human and Divine. It suggests the possibility of a solution on the higher level of the Christian conception of God and His relation to the World. Before attempting to deal with the philosophical problem of the One and the Many, it seeks to define the content of both and its definition clings close to empirical data supplied by a careful scrutiny of the behaviour of finite human personality in its deepest and best moments in religious experience; claiming that in such experience we are in touch with Reality; that our communion has indeed an *objective* reference; that our prayer life is a real contact with a real Object, defined not in terms of an Impersonal Something but a Personal God.

The debt we owe to Monism is the bringing home afresh to our minds of the principle of the Divine Immanence. All that is contained in the theological dogma of the Divine Omnipresence is confirmed by the truth which Monism seeks to emphasize, viz. the eternal working of

the Divine expressing Itself through physical laws, through human life, in the material and mental not less than in the moral and spiritual spheres. A right emphasis upon the Divine Immanence rescues us from a false Deism. We no longer regard God as working *ab extra*. To regard God as external to His Universe, interfering in a capricious manner from time to time is a Deistic conception which must yield place to the deeper perception of the Divine Mind expressing itself in ever-fuller degree in and through the Creation. The thought of God as the Ground and sustaining Principle through all the processes of nature and human activity is fully confirmed by the great Monistic principle with its ever-widening generalizations as the result of discoveries in Science in its various branches. The conception of an ultimate First Cause adequate for the explanation of all other causes, the thought of all laws issuing from and explained by a common source is the very nerve of the Monistic philosophy with its search for the Absolute. Theism confirms the craving of the human mind for some far-reaching unification which shall embrace the undoubted dualisms given in our finite apprehension of the universe and ourselves as part of it. It finds this principle of unification not in an impersonal Absolute but in the perfect Personality of the Living God. This is its lesson to all Monistic schemes which are content to seek for ultimate Reality below the level of the highest we know, viz. a truly human personal life.

Whilst accepting from spiritual monism the confirmation of the truth of the Divine Immanence, Christian Theism must go on to postulate as against

Monistic Pantheism the equally vital truth of the Divine Transcendence.

When we come to the attempt to explain what we mean by Divine Transcendence, it must be confessed that it eludes definition. We can, however, fall back upon imperfect analogies in our efforts to apprehend what we cannot fully comprehend and the problem is considerably clarified if we lift it into the sphere of personality. We know that in some way we dwell in our own bodies and yet are not of them in the sense of being identified with them. We are dealing with two distinct orders of reality—a material body, a spiritual self. We permeate our bodies through and through, we are immanent in them yet not spatially. At the same time we transcend them. We can never locate the human spirit in any part of our bodily organism. We infinitely transcend our bodies as living spirits and yet we are immanent in every particle of them. Hence the analogy is to some extent justified : What we are to our bodies, that God is to the whole Creation immanent in the whole and in every minutest part, yet transcendent above the whole as the sole condition of indwelling in every part.

Once we weaken either term and lose hold of the truth it seeks to express, we fall either into a Deism which thinks of an " absentee God " divorced from His Creation, or into a Pantheism which identifies God with His Creation. We have to avoid Deism and Pantheism.

Theism safeguards the truth of the difference between Creator and creature : the Divine Sovereignty of the Transcendent God " in Whom we live and move and have our being " but Whom we are not. God is not

another name for the totality of finite Creation viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*.

"There is an immanence of the Divine in the human which whilst it eludes definition, is not identification."

"God is ontologically remote, dynamically near."

The problem is the synthesis of transcendence and immanence. The question is whether Christian Theism gives us a better philosophical system with its concepts—Personality human and Divine; the Trinity in Unity; the Transcendence and Immanence of God—than other rival philosophies which seek to reach logical consistency at the expense of belittling much which the religious consciousness regards as essential data for the solution of the problem.

A Christian Philosophy rejects all emanation theories in favour of the doctrine of Creation "out of nothing." According to the Christian conception, God by a free creative act of will produces finite spirits made in His image with a measure of freedom analogous to His own, limited by the conditions of a finite nature and the eternal purpose of the Creator, but within these limits arising from the side of Nature and of God, free, having the power of self-determination; free to achieve something in the sphere of the ethical and spiritual; free to become the sons of God and heirs of eternal life.

Christian Theism is committed to this concept of finite created personality in relation to the Absolute Personality of God, All-Holy, All-Love. It is one of the most difficult and at the same time one of the richest concepts in the whole range of religious

philosophical thought. Our thesis is that in it alone is contained the view of the relation of God to the World which best fits in with the data derived from an examination of the whole content of our experience, including as this must the religious experience of the soul in communion with God.

It remains to indicate in conclusion the kind of basis upon which we should propose to reconstruct dogma in terms of modern thought. If Catholic Scholasticism relies too strongly upon the findings of *a priori* reasoning and Protestant Scholasticism is too fully committed to the same principle, we are equally clear that in rejecting these as inadequate foundations for any reconstruction we cannot safely fall back upon what is called religious experience. This seems to be too narrow and hazardous a basis upon which to rebuild the Christian Faith in terms of modern thought. A Christ evolved from the Christian consciousness does less than justice to the claims of historical Christianity with its roots in pre-Christian Hebrew ethical Monotheism. We should in consequence prefer to rebuild upon a threefold foundation and test our building by an appeal to Tradition, Reason and Experience. We should strive to do justice to historic Christianity as this presents itself in the form of the Catholic Faith supernaturally originated and historically mediated. We should submit this Deposit to the considered judgment of the human reason and appeal to sound learning and an unfettered quest for truth as criteria by which to test and judge of its contents. We should finally submit such a tested Deposit to the verdict of disciplined experience. If such a presentation of historic Christianity critically

sifted were found to respond to the needs of human life and able to be in our modern world "Good News" to perishing souls, we should be in a strong position for regarding it as an adequate and satisfying reconstruction of dogma or representation of Christianity to meet at once the demands of our intellectual quest after truth and our spiritual quest after the Living God.

This threefold test of History, Reason and Experience saves us at once from traditionalism, intellectualism and emotionalism in our effort to reformulate the Faith once for all delivered to the saints. It is the only sound basis for any authoritative representation of historic Christianity. We prefer to reformulate ancient dogma rather than to offer a new religion because we believe that our modern world's need is best met by Christianity. Our modern world needs no new saviour-God of man's devising, but the Christ who is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.

We must remember that a true conservatism is not one which loves to live in the bygone days, because and only because they are gone, but one which regards its task as an attempt to preserve for the benefit of the present and to hand on intact to future generations that deposit of truth which the past contains—the Faith once for all delivered to the saints.

If in these days of the reign of relativity in every department of human thought, we are faced by a widespread Agnosticism, which is content to reject on all sides established hypotheses and to treat the facts of yesterday as the fictions of to-day, men may come to respect a Church which can proclaim in the strong

accents of a living Faith some measure of certitude and persists in preserving in Credal forms from the cradle of early Christianity such staggering assertions as confound the wise in our midst, baffle the human intellect and yet prove withal music to perishing souls. Whilst we lay no claim to an unalterable Creed so far as its form is concerned, we do contend for an unchangeable content. We make to-day for Christianity as an historical religion a claim to revealed Truth which was no discovery of man, still less an invention of any human imagination, but on the contrary was derived from a Divine source and was embodied in a Divine Person who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man. You may call this theology or dogma as you please, but the Church holds to it as the truest and most adequate explanation of historic fact, and Christianity stands or falls by its acceptance or rejection at the hands of the sons of men.

This is our challenge: our battle-cry: our Creed: and with it we face without fear whatever the future holds in store for the Church of to-morrow.

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